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# Saturday Review

January 7, 1978

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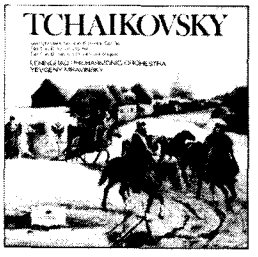


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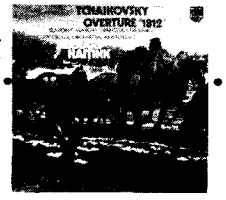


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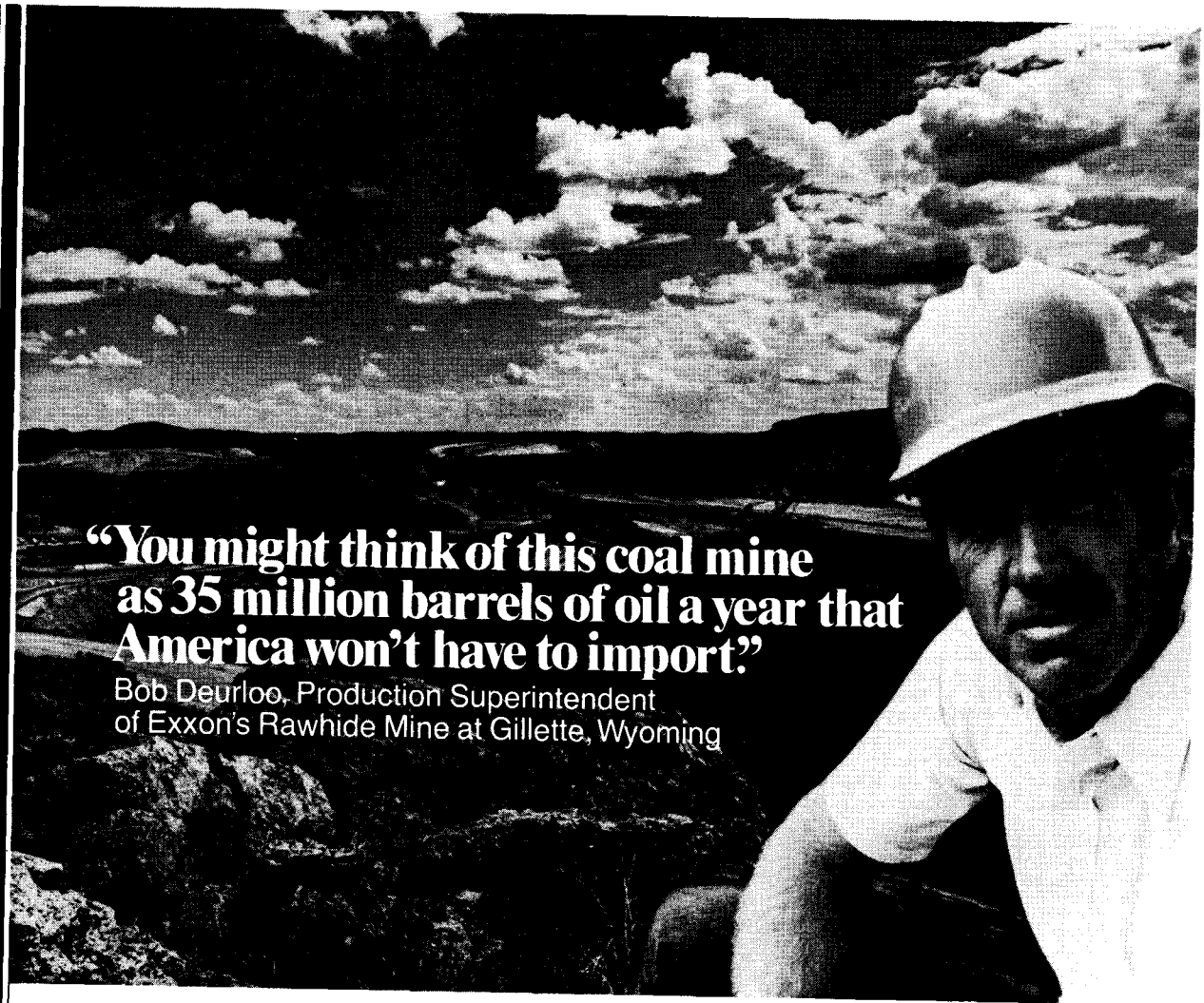
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Our coal development is part of Exxon's activities to find and to supply more energy for America, from America.

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# Saturday Review

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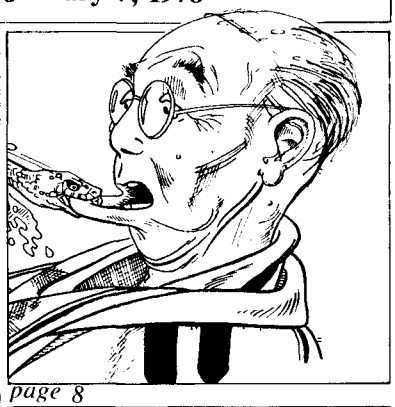

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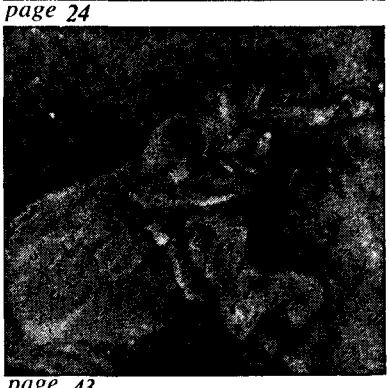

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# Birthday Party

IT WOULD BE difficult to imagine a more satisfying birthday party than the one held in California recently for Will Durant, ninety-two, historian of civilization and celebrant of the human mind. The party also honored Ariel Durant, his wife, who for almost two decades has been the full collaborator in the series *The Story of Civilization.*

The combined celebration took place in Los Angeles, where the Durants have lived for the past 35 years. Not even the grand ballroom of one of the city's newest hotels was large enough to accommodate all the people who wanted to join in the tribute. Those of us who were privileged to take part in the program spoke mainly of the Durants' ability to share their own sense of excitement and creative wonder about the legacy of the past with millions of readers.

The event coincided with the publication of the latest book* by the Durants, their joint memoirs drawn from their 64 years together. The literary system employed in *A Dual Autobiography* enables the authors to alternate within each chapter, not infrequently addressing individual perceptions to the same events. Ariel Durant, in one of her commentaries, describes Will's approach to history perhaps better than any of the participants in the birthday program. She says that Will often "talked of his fictional persons as more real than the vanishing figures and events of the day; Luther, Erasmus, Calvin, Henry VIII, Gutenberg, Rabelais, and Copernicus were more vital, more lasting in their influence, than the politics, prizefights, murders, fashions, market reports, and baseball scores of the daily press. So we buried our heads in the living past rather than the dying present."

In a sense, the Durants have conferred a kind of immortality on their readers. They have enabled people to add thousands of years to their natural lifetimes through a sense of direct participation in the past. If the supreme gift of any historian is the ability to make bygone ages fully accessible to contemporary readers, then the Durants have been lavishly endowed indeed.

There is no particular secret or mystery behind the success of the Durants. They are, above all, discoverers. They approach each period of history as though it were totally new terrain. They are not intimidated by the fact that other writers, many of whom enjoy tall reputations as scholars, have been there first. It is the Durants' own response to history, and their way of conveying that response, that is at the heart of their appeal and that represents their primary value as interpreters.

For a long time, their technique was frowned upon by professional historians, who tended to regard them not as serious scholars but as popularizers. Writing in the *Saturday Review* of November 9, 1957, Garrett Mattingly commented that "it is a mistake to talk about scholarship in connection with Mr. Durant's work at all."

**Will and Ariel Durant: A Dual Autobiography*, Simon & Schuster, $12.95.

Will Durant's reply, several issues later, was written with characteristic friendliness and directness. He said he recognized an obligation to go to the original sources, but he contended that those sources were not confined to the libraries. He examined the historical evidence on location, making eight trips to Europe and two around the world for that purpose:

> How foolish it would be for me, having only one life, to repeat for my present study of Elizabeth I the painstaking researches that Froude fathered in his five great volumes on her reign. To expect of a man to write the history of every phase of 60 centuries of human life in the same way in which he would write a monograph on one figure or aspect of one period in one nation is either to be rigorous beyond decency, or to object to any attempt at a humanized synthesis of knowledge.

Twenty-two years earlier, James Henry Breasted, the distinguished historian and director of the Haskell Oriental Museum, wrote a critical appraisal of Will Durant's *Our Oriental Heritage* in an extensive essay for the *Saturday Review*. Again, Will Durant replied on the letters page of *SR*. His own evaluation of his purpose—as well as of his place in historical writing—is worth repeating:

> I am trying to write not a series of specialist monographs but a philosophical survey and unification of the cultural history of mankind. Just as the speculative philosopher, seeking perspective in space, must turn to the scientist for facts, so the philosophical historian, seeking perspective in time, must rely upon the fact-gathering historian... My own interest is not political but cultural; the political story has been too often told. I have cared for political and economic history only to the extent of sketching it in as the background of a culture; it is not my essential concern; and I have not felt called upon, in this field, to make a study of original sources—though the volume makes liberal use of the old Greek historians. But in the realm of culture I have, in nearly all major instances, gone to the masterpieces of literature, philosophy, and art themselves... To prove this point in detail would be a weary conceit; let the honest reader judge for himself.

The point was, and still is, sound. J. B. Bury's *A History of Greece*, for example, is often described as the definitive work on the subject. Yet Bury had very few sources outside the standard ones—Thucydides, Herodotus, etc. Later historians of eminent reputation, like Sir Alfred Zimmern, George Botsford, and C. A. Robinson, Jr., used the same primary sources but employed collateral research and applied their individual perceptions. Durant has done the same. He has viewed events through the prism of his own historical and philosophical development.

The person who was most prophetic about the high position Durant would eventually come to occupy was John Dewey. When Durant's first major work, *The Story of Philosophy*, was published, John Dewey immediately recognized the significance of what Durant was attempting. Dewey was not at all impressed with the criticism that Durant's book was popularization. He said that Durant's "expositions are accurate as well as clear; his personal comments are always intelligent and useful. He has shown remarkable skill in selecting quotations that are typical, that give the flavor of the author, and that are readable. In fine, he has humanized rather than merely popularized the story of philosophy."

Critics no longer put down the Durants on the ground of



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inadequate scholarship. On the contrary: The Durants are hailed because they have introduced large numbers of readers to the historical procession. They have been more attracted to history's pageantry, perhaps, than to its imponderables, but they have not detached themselves from the search for meaning. While they have stayed closer to historical personages than to historical abstractions, they have been able to make important connections between people and events not merely within each era but in the long perspective. Whether they were writing about philosophy or civilization, they were always aware that history's effects are felt far beyond the causal arenas. They have performed an important service by steering clear of the vertical construction of historical writing—that is, the method by which historians handle events by climbing a chronological ladder in a single area. The Durants deal with the *interaction* of ideas, events, and personalities far outside their original habitat. They make no pretense of being definitive; they regard themselves rather as synthesizers. As such, they belong to a rare breed.

No slight is intended when it is said that their dual autobiography may be the most valuable of all their books. Valuable in the sense that it is a superb distillation of their ideas. It is their own verdict on their lives. It describes their own learning process. It conveys their own enthusiasms about the challenges they found in history and philosophy. It says things that may have been impolitic for them to say in their formal works. It is a grand summing-up, written with warmth and a palpable sense of appreciation for the opportunity to attempt a superhuman literary task.

But it is, most of all, a love story—of their love for each other, their love for history, their love for the life of the mind, and their love for the human race. They are troubled by what they see in the world today, but they are not cynical. No one could engage in such joyous exploration and be a cynic.—N.C.

# What I Have Learned

*Editor's Note: Will Durant, in responding to the tributes he received on his ninety-second birthday, told of some of the things he had learned in a lifetime of thinking and writing. The following paragraphs are abstracted from that talk.*

TO THIS DAY I believe that there is as much love as hostility in the world, animal as well as human. Even in the small circle of my acquaintances, I have found a surprising number of happy marriages and so much incidental kindness that I have quite lost my faith in the wickedness of mankind.

The reading of Darwin in my eighteenth year, and then of Schopenhauer and Herbert Spencer, shook both my optimism and my religious faith and left me struggling with a dreary determinism in which, despite pleasant interludes, nothing seemed certain but grief and death. For a time the brave books of Peter Kropotkin gave me hope that man had learned to moderate competition with cooperation—in the family, village, assembly, law and police, states and alliances; but I soon learned that all these forms of mutual aid were designed to meet the competition of other groups; the struggle for existence involved larger unities, but competition remained the ultimate reality, war was the final judge, and Darwin seemed victorious over Christ.

I need not point out that the decline of religious belief has seriously undermined social order. There have, of course, been other causes: the passage from agriculture to industry, from the watchful surveillance of village neighbors to the protective anonymity of the individual in the city crowd, from the natural discipline of the family farm to the loosened parental authority in the city apartment; the separation of a divided religion and the schools; the enfeeblement of a public opinion that does not know what to believe or what to condemn.... Relieved from moral limitations, popular literature became a school for scandal and a textbook of sexual anatomy and skill. "Liberated" artists scorned to convey beauty or meaning and repudiated the disciplined art that gives lasting form to transient significance. An odor of more than physical decay rose from our city streets.

In 1963 I made myself an angry Amos or Jeremiah and wrote, and now say to you:

"We have been silent too long; and part of our tardy righteousness may well be due to the lessened flow of sap in our flesh. No matter; let us speak out. Let us say humbly, but publicly, that we resent corruption in politics, dishonesty in business, faithlessness in marriage, pornography in literature and the theater, coarseness in language, chaos in music, meaninglessness in art.

"It is time for all good men to come to the aid of their party, whose name is civilization."

But I will not end on this plaintive note. I still believe in you, and in America, and in Europe, to which I owe so much. I stand with those Americans who wish to reconcile liberty with order, and with those Russians who wish to reconcile order with liberty. I sympathize with a President who faces every day a dozen problems, any one of which demands exclusive and complete attention. I believe that our present Congress is as high in education, intelligence, and integrity as any Congress in our history. I believe that in this century America has made more progress, except in morals and manners, than most of us in our youth had the audacity to expect; and that it will continue to face crises bravely, to survive, and to grow. I believe that there is a creative spirit in the universe—in every atom, in every plant and animal, in every man and woman—a spirit evident in history, despite every setback and disaster. I believe that the human heritage, in technology, government, education, literature, science, and art, is greater than ever before, is better protected, and more widely spread, than ever.

Let us admit half of the terrible picture that Jonathan Swift drew of humanity; let us agree that in every generation of man's history, and almost everywhere, we find superstition, hypocrisy, corruption, cruelty, crime, and war; in the balance against them we place the long roster of poets, composers, artists, scientists, philosophers, and saints. That same species upon which poor Swift revenged the frustration of his flesh wrote the plays of Shakespeare, the music of Bach and Handel, the odes of Keats, the *Republic* of Plato, the *Principia* of Newton, and the *Ethics* of Spinoza; it built the Parthenon and painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; it conceived and cherished, even if it crucified, Christ. Man did all this; let him never despair. —WILL DURANT



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# Letters from Readers

**Powerful Placebo**

As a neurologist, I am easily depressed by the demands of patients and their families for miracles and guarantees in chronic, frequently incurable, progressive diseases. My sincere appreciation for N.C.'s fair and realistic portrayal of physicians ["The Mysterious Placebo: How Mind Helps Medicine Work," October 1].

I have been frustrated many times by patients' demands for prescriptions, expectations of a simple cure, simplistic thinking, failure to consider whether the benefit is worth the risk, and failure to differentiate between cure and relief or even to understand the concept of unaided recovery. I am similarly disturbed by the dangerous degree to which pseudomedicine—promising sex appeal, beauty, wealth, and freedom from aches and pains—has become such a staple of our economy.

Medicine needs educated patients who understand the limitations and appreciate the complexities of this artful, imperfect science. N.C.'s article does much to provide this education.

*Dr. Richard Cytowic*
*Winston-Salem, N.C.*

Years ago, while recovering from a fairly bad malaria attack, I was the guest of a resident of Sokoto Province, in northwestern Nigeria. The reading matter I was given while recuperating was the five volumes of Heinrich Barth's *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, published in London in 1857 and 1858, and the *Complete Works* of Rudyard Kipling. I read them all.

Barth was a classical scholar, a linguist, an Arabist, a historian, and a geographer who joined James Richardson's expedition to western Sudan. While I do not have the exact reference at hand, Barth mentions in the first volume that Richardson as "caravan doctor" had a supply of red, white, and blue pills; anyone getting sick on Mondays or Thursdays received one color, on Tuesdays or Fridays, another, and so forth. Barth's comment was, "I'm not sure, but I believe it was the best system."

*Louis Nadeau*
*Elizabeth City, N.C.*

Carl Jung said that what differentiated him from others was his belief that the psyche, with all its strangeness and incongruence with physical reality, was real and operated according to laws and principles of its own. Bit by bit we're confirming his intuition and discovering that physical being by no means defines the limits of reality. In fact, the body appears to obey summonses of a higher order—its own consciousness—and has done so, apparently, since the beginning of time. We don't yet know the magnitude of that consciousness, but it is evident, as N.C.'s article illustrates, that all of us are both more complicated and more complete than we have thought.

At the height of our romance with technology and "objective reality," it was fashionable to dismiss psychic healing as a primitive relic, along with various religious healing practices. Now, objective reality itself has taken us to the threshold of mystery and confounded us. It may yet turn out that the ultimate answers to the questions of energy, healing, and life are within us.

*Dean Holt*
*Columbia, Md.*

I was pleased to read N.C.'s excellent article on the use and abuse of placebos. There is only one point he made with which I differ. When N.C. says a drug is "powerful," he implies that it affects various organ systems besides the one it is intended to help. A pharmacologist, on the other hand, equates "powerful" with "potent," that is, only small amounts of a drug are needed to produce a desired effect.

Potency is very important since it allows the use of only small quantities of a drug for a particular indication, making side effects from nonspecific actions on unrelated organ systems less likely.

Specificity is even more important since, regardless of the dose, only the malfunctioning tissue or organ is affected, leaving other systems free to function without side effects.

Obviously, the ideal marriage is of specificity and potency. I am happy to say that we have reached a stage in which certain drugs are, indeed, aimed like "an arrow at a target," as N.C. put it, and not like a shower of porcupine quills. This is by no means true of all drugs, but it is a goal that the pharmaceutical industry has been striving toward and one that in certain cases has been largely achieved.

*Michael Antonaccio*
*Director of Pharmacology*
*E. R. Squibb & Sons*
*Princeton, N.J.*

One of the most potent placebos not mentioned in N.C.'s excellent article is surgery. For more than a century, surgeons have, knowingly or unknowingly, admitted "a little air" into the abdomen, producing "cures" despite the fact that they can find no visible pathology in the abdominal cavity. Rarely do people consider the placebo effect of surgery; however, it is time to examine its effect on the surgical patient, who also has his own "doctor who resides within."

*Dr. Ronald Lawrence*
*Los Angeles, Calif.*

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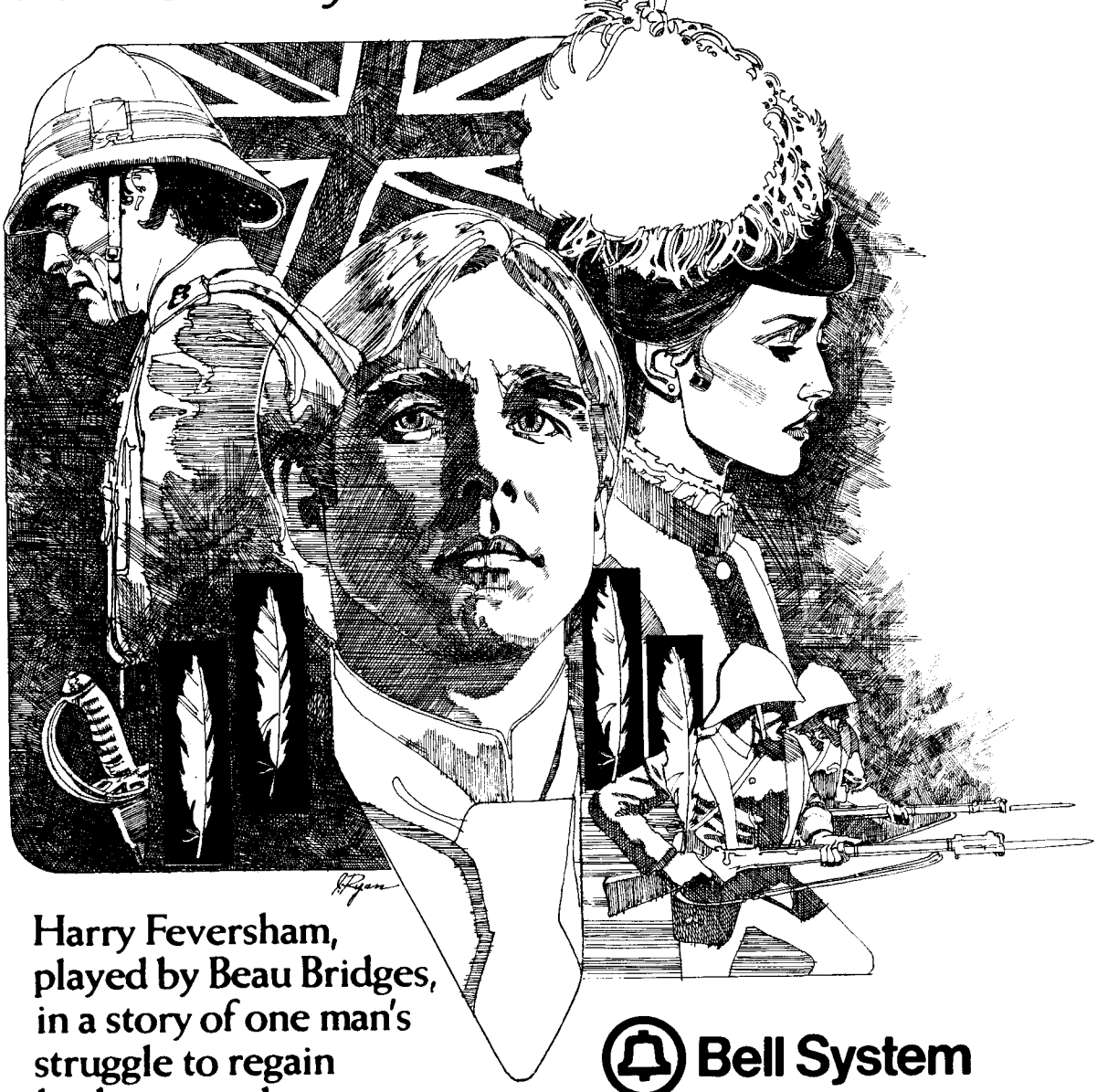
# The Four Feathers

Starring: Beau Bridges
Robert Powell  Simon Ward
Jane Seymour  Harry Andrews
and Richard Johnson as Abou Fatma



Harry Feversham, played by Beau Bridges, in a story of one man's struggle to regain his honor and the woman he loves.

Bell System

January 1, NBC-TV, 9:00-11:00 EST

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# Front Runners

## Abortion and the Churches

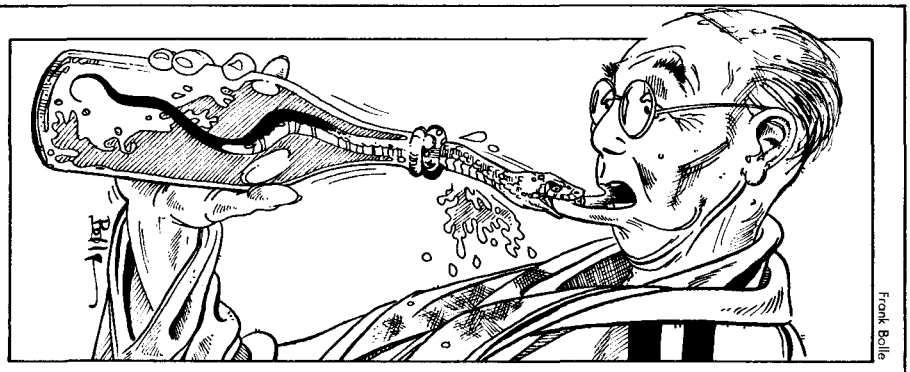
America's churches have always been strongly anti-abortion, right? Wrong, says Professor James C. Mohr, in his forthcoming book, *Abortion in America: The Origins and Evolution of National Policy*.

Far from being anti-abortion historically, says Mohr, the Protestant churches were relaxed and neutral on the subject during the 1800s. Abortionists openly advertised their trade, even in religious publications. "The vast majority of the Protestant clergy in the United States ... chose to let their flocks decide for themselves as individuals the morality or immorality of abortion, rather than move aggressively to define it as sin." Not surprisingly, during the 1800s an estimated one out of five pregnancies ended in abortion—and married, white, middle-class Protestants accounted for most of these abortions.

Yet by the 1900s abortions were anathema: "Virtually every jurisdiction had laws upon its books that proscribed the practice sharply and declared most abortions to be criminal offenses."

What caused the turnabout? Was it that the churches had at last swung into action against abortion? Not at all, says Mohr. It wasn't the churches that became anti-abortion, it was the *doctors*, who saw the cause as one they could exploit in their efforts to professionalize their practice. The clergy, meanwhile, remained aloof.

"Virtually every petition on the subject placed before a state legislature in the nineteenth century came either from a medical organization or from an individual physician," Mohr writes. He adds that the medicos were bitter when the Protestant clergy failed to join the fray. The book (priced at $12.50) will be published by Oxford University Press this month.



Frank Bolle

## A Mean Drink

In Mexico, a dead worm curled up in the bottom of your tequila bottle is considered proof you are drinking the real thing. But Japan goes Mexico one better by lowering live, poisonous snakes into bottles of a local tipple called *schochu*. After steeping in the brew for an hour or so, the drowned snakes are supposed to give off potent juices that are good for what ails you—especially loss of virility.

Recently a seventy-two-year-old Tokyo man named Masuzo Nezu plopped a deadly Okinawan snake called the "habu" into his *schochu*. An hour later Nezu tried to take a snort from the bottle and for his trouble got bitten by the snake, which was undrowned and fighting mad.

When Nezu called the Tokyo fire department and explained his problem, he touched off a small panic, what with firemen having to scramble around town in search of just the right serum. In the end, a Tokyo medical institute delivered the serum and Nezu survived—no doubt to spend the rest of his days pondering the ways of snakes and septuagenarians.

## Up, Up, and Away

### INSTRUCTIONS
TO [AIRLINE] HOSTESSES

1) Warn passengers against throwing cigarettes and cigars out of the window.
2) Keep the clock wound up in the passenger cabin.
3) Carry a railroad timetable in case the plane is grounded.
4) Keep an eye on passengers when they go to the toilet to be sure they don't mistakenly go out the emergency exit.

The above instructions to flight attendants on a 1930s airline were recently reprinted by Air Canada's in-house magazine. Air Canada is, incidentally, currently celebrating its fortieth anniversary.

## Lost in the Stacks

What goes on in the minds of indexers and catalogers? Writing in *Bookviews*, Ralph Tyler quotes Peter Ustinov as saying, "In Paris's [archives] recently they were trying to find some material on Rosa Luxemburg, the [German] revolutionary, and finally, after much searching, discovered she was filed under 'public gardens.' "

## Front Runners Submissions

*SR* will pay readers $25 for any clipping or item accepted for use in Front Runners. We regret that we cannot acknowledge receipt of materials, run by-lines with items, or return unused submissions.
Please send items to:
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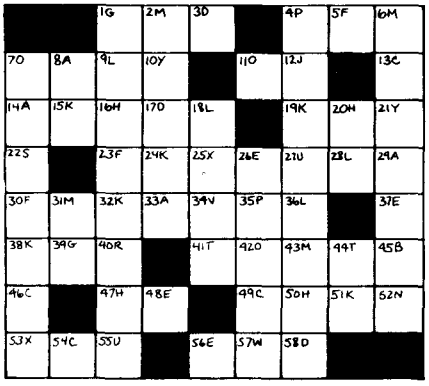
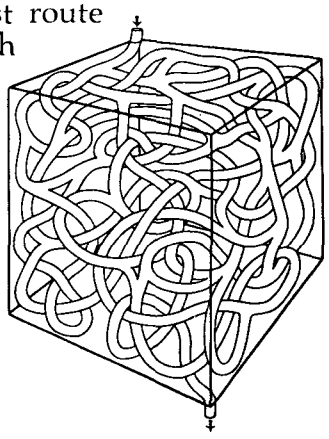
# At last. A magazine to test your mind.

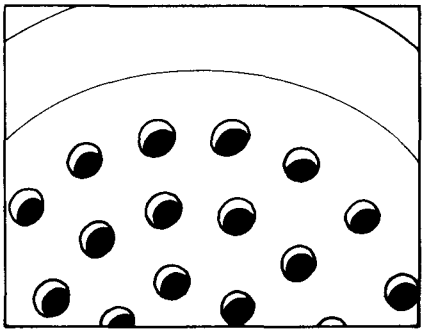
It's called Games Magazine and it's the exciting new way to keep your mind agile, active and attuned.



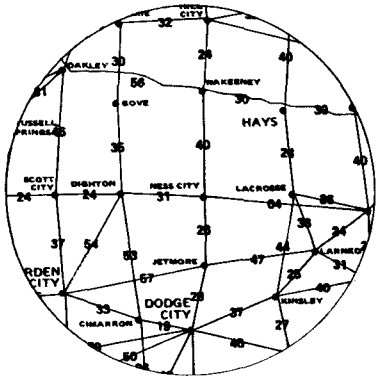
The following are just a few small teasers to see if you're ready for the sophisticated acrostics, British crosswords and find-a-words we have in store for you.

Mazes: The plumbers problem. Which is the shortest route through these pipes?



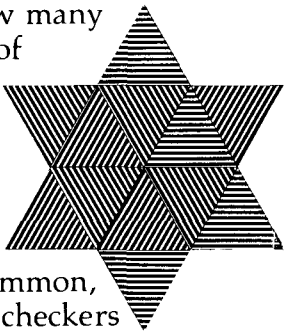


Eyeball benders: A series of partial photography all designed to test your ingenuity. The clue for this object is "Chatterbox."




States of mind: Can you figure out which state this is? Watch out for the traps!

Beguilers: Don't be fooled by the apparent simplicity here! How many triangles of any size are in this star?



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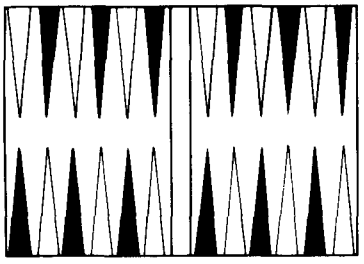

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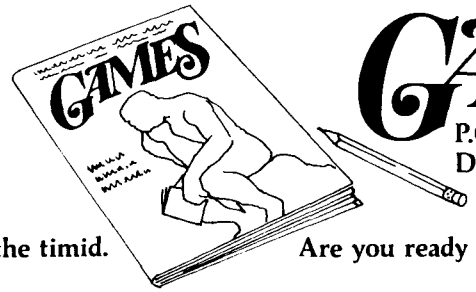


**GAMES**
**P.O. Box 10147**
**Des Moines, Iowa 50349**

**Remember, Games Magazine is not for the timid. Are you ready for it?**

Answers: Eyeball Bender: Telephone receiver/States of mind: Kansas/Beguilers: 20 triangles. If you look closer there are 365.

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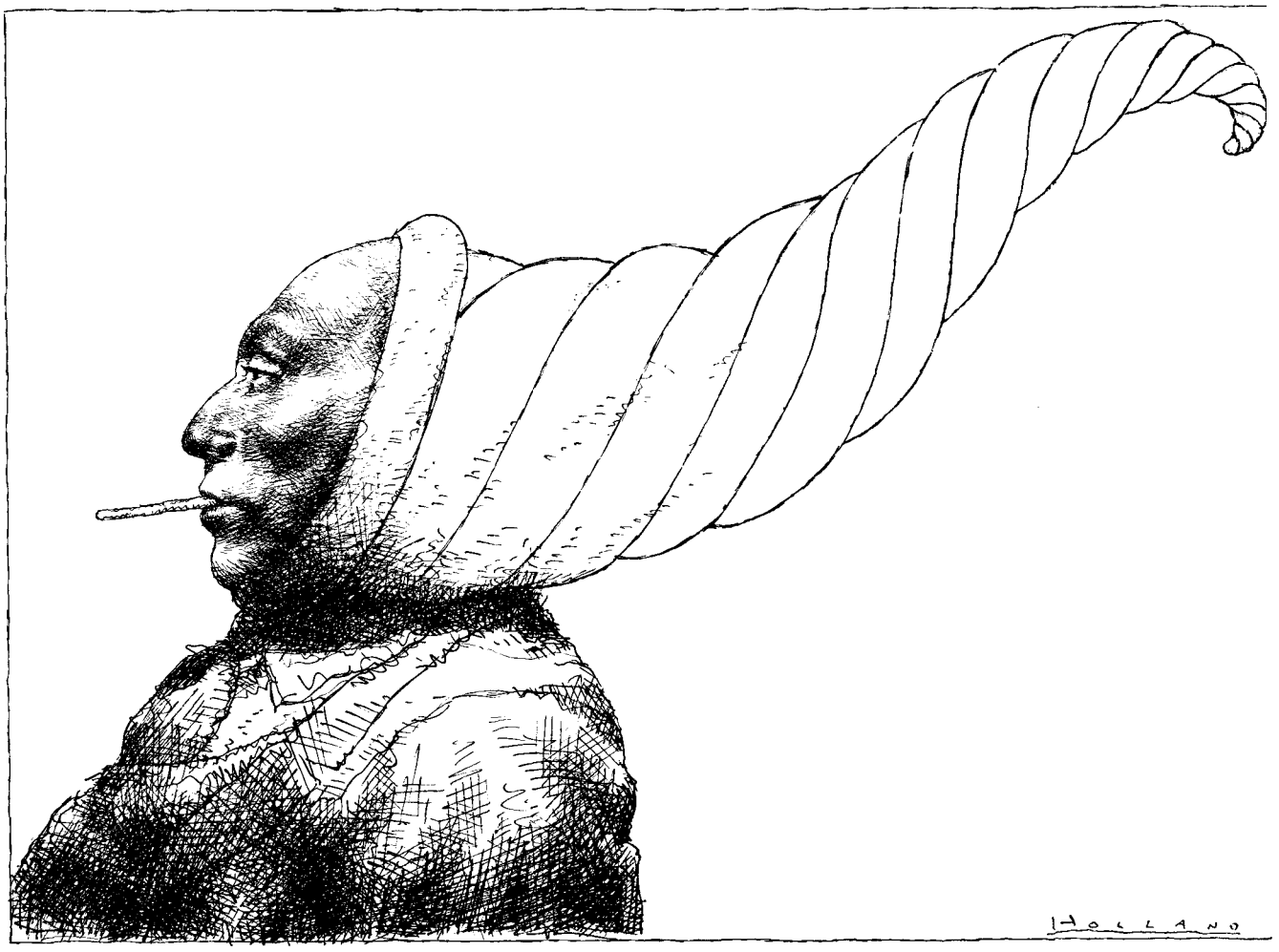
# The Great Health Care Rip-off

by Robert Claiborne




In 1976, we Americans spent nearly $140 billion on our health needs—$640 apiece, or more than $2,500 for a family of four. Health care in all its forms soaked up more than one dollar in twelve of our gross national product, and by 1980, according to government estimates, the figure will exceed one dollar in ten. What's going on?

Inflation is obviously part of the answer, but only part: Since 1965, our health bill has risen more than twice as fast as prices have. Another part of the answer is that we are getting more care—and sometimes better care—now than we did then; yet another is that a minority of doctors and nursing home operators have been ripping us off, legally or otherwise. The main reason for rising health costs, however, is none of these, but rather the way the health care industry is organized. The individuals and groups that provide care—notably, the hospitals—and the organizations through which we pay for it—notably, Blue Cross—operate under incentives that reward inefficiency and outright waste. As a result, while a minority of Americans still get less health care than they need, collectively most of us get (and pay for) more, and more elaborate, care than we need—often, more than is good for us.

The American health care business is a peculiar industry in two fundamental ways. The first is its almost total immunity to the influence of supply and demand *because "demand" is set largely by the supplier*. Normally, the decision to purchase a given commodity or service, from a Cadillac to a shoeshine, is made by the buyer; in medicine, the decision is made mostly by the seller. About the only major medical purchasing decision most of us make is whether or not to see the doctor; thereafter, he decides what treatment we need, perhaps including hospital treatment, in which case he normally specifies the hospital. There, he and other doctors decide what tests and X rays we require, whether or not we need surgery and/or intensive care, and when—assuming we survive—we can be discharged.

In theory, of course, we are still "free" to purchase or not to purchase. We don't *have* to get the prescription filled, go into the hospital, undergo surgery, and so on. In practice, few



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of us would have the nerve to go against doctors' orders, since we rightly doubt our own competence to make such decisions. Unfortunately, the people who do make the decisions too often have no incentive to question the cost of the decisions they make; indeed, their personal interests may well sway them toward high-cost rather than low-cost medicine. Even worse, we ourselves often have little reason to query the costs.

The reason in each case lies in the second peculiarity of the health care business: Its bills, unlike those of most businesses, are in large measure paid not by the customer directly but by "third parties"—Blue Cross-Blue Shield or commercial insurance companies or the governmental bodies that pick up the tab for Medicare and Medicaid. Thus a large part (over two thirds) of what we pay is effectively out of sight, which notoriously means out of mind.

Of course, we still pay the bill eventually; health, like anything else, operates on the venerable principle of TANSTAAFL (There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch). Blue Cross or other health insurance is paid for either by payroll deductions, which cut our spendable income, or by employers' "contributions," which raise prices. Of the $4,800 you spend for a new Cutlass or Camaro, perhaps $110 goes to pay the health bills of the General Motors workers who made it, and probably as much again goes for health insurance covering the steel, rubber, and plastics workers who supply GM. Medicare and Medicaid payments come out of taxes—and you know who pays those. If inflation in health costs is a serious problem, it is one not only for the government or the company but for all of us.

To understand just how third-party payments and the lack of supply and demand pressures have inflated health costs requires a closer look at the health business. A good place to start is with the hospitals, whose charges are by far the biggest item (about 40 percent) in our national health bill. They are also, except for nursing home charges, the fastest growing item, costing us some six-and-a-half times what they did in 1960. Finally, an overwhelming 92 percent of all hospital charges is paid by third parties.

Perhaps the most basic fact about American hospitals is that for well over 30 years they have had more beds than they—or we—have needed. Medical economists figure that an efficient hospital should have an average of 85 percent of its beds occupied, the other 15 percent serving as a reserve for victims of epidemics and for seasonal fluctuations in illness. In 1946, the actual hospital bed occupancy rate was a mere 72 percent; 30 years later, it had increased only to 75 percent, *though hospitalization had doubled.* That is, the already underoccupied hospitals had added new beds almost as fast as their patient loads had increased.

A hospital is like a hotei: Empty rooms mean less income, which must be made up by increasing the charge for occupied rooms. Experts estimate that maintaining an unoccupied hospital bed costs between one half and two thirds as much as maintaining an occupied one; taking the lower figure, it turns out that excess hospital capacity is increasing hospital costs by some 7 percent—nearly $4 billion in 1976.

On the face of it, adding new beds when old ones were still empty was managerial insanity. Why did the hospitals do it? A little over a year ago, a prestigious committee of the Institute of Medicine, an affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences, issued what is probably the definitive word on the subject in a report entitled "Controlling the Supply of Hospital Beds."

As a major reason for hospital overcapacity, the committee cited "powerful community influences" to build new hospitals, expand old ones, and resist the closing of unneeded ones "regardless of their efficiency or even their financial viability." These influences included "community pride," "influential sponsors," and the economic lure of hospital payrolls. Another influence that the committee might well have cited is the political clout of local bankers, who handle hospital funds and make construction loans, and of local contractors and building trades unions.

As against these powerful incentives to expand, the committee found essentially no incentives not to. Hospitals (as we have already noted) get nearly all their revenue from third-party payers, and "*these revenues are provided primarily on the basis of costs incurred*" (emphasis added). In simple language, the more the hospitals spend, the more they get. Thus, said the committee, when a hospital invests money in expansion, the risk is "largely transferred to the federal government and other third-party payers." In short, the forces that shape decision in the hospital business "virtually guarantee the widespread development of excess hospital bed capacity."

Though the committee did not address the point, the actual excess is a lot bigger than the difference between 75 and 85 percent occupancy: Hospitals not only have more beds than they need for their present patients but they also have more patients than they should.

The strongest evidence of this comes from the experience of the so-called health maintenance organizations (HMOs), the biggest and best known of which is the Kaiser-Permanente Medical Care Program, operating mainly in California. HMOs are technically "comprehensive, prepaid" plans—comprehensive because they provide care both in and out of the hospital, prepaid because the subscriber (or his employer) pays a flat annual fee regardless of whether he merely sees his doctor for an annual checkup or goes into the hospital for open-heart surgery. For HMOs, therefore, it's not a case of the more they spend, the more they get, but, like most businesses, the more they spend, the less they have left. This means, among other things, that HMOs have a powerful incentive to use hospitalization—by far the costliest form of care—as little as possible.

As a result, the best (and biggest) of the HMOs take care of their members with 65 percent less hospitalization than the national average (even excluding the chronically ill): HMO subscribers and their families don't go into the hospital as often and don't stay there as long when they do. Yet, by and large, they are satisfied: HMOs have grown steadily and now service over six million people, a number equal to the entire population of Sweden.

This 65 percent reduction in hospitalization is admittedly not quite as impressive as it looks, since HMO members are on the average somewhat younger and (partly for this reason) healthier than the general population. But even allowing for these differences, the rest of us ought to be able to manage on 35 to 50 percent less hospitalization. Again taking the lower figure, the potential saving is on the order of $20 billion a year.

Why are we hospitalized so much and at such cost? A big part of the reason is third-party payments, which means, in the Institute of Medicine committee's words, that "neither


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**"For years hospitals have had more beds than they—or we—have needed....A hospital is like a hotel: Empty rooms mean less income, which must be made up by increasing the charge for occupied rooms."**

the patient nor the physician tends to be concerned with the cost of the treatment." But this is true *only* if the patient occupies a bed. Treatment or tests given on an outpatient basis or in the doctor's office are covered less thoroughly or not at all by insurance.

Thus, the doctor prefers to admit his patient to the hospital if at all possible, since his fee will probably be paid automatically and the patient will save money. The patient clearly won't object to saving money, and the hospital certainly won't object, since the more patients, the fewer empty beds. The only possible objector would be the third party; but, says the committee, the third party "usually conceives of itself as being in no position to do anything but pay the bill." We shall see in a moment why third parties act this way.

Some hospitals actively encourage doctors to admit patients regardless of need, simply to fill beds. A recent investigation in New York City, where more than 5,000 out of 37,000 beds are reckoned surplus, disclosed that patients were being admitted for such frivolous reasons as the treatment of warts; others were kept in the hospital for days or even weeks longer than necessary. In the words of one harassed hospital administrator, "At an 80 percent occupancy rate, I stand to break even. But if I go below 80 percent, I get zapped. Any admissions over the 80 percent rate are gravy, and you better believe we try to find a lot of it." Dr. Lowell E. Belling, the city's health commissioner, described the situation as "a chaotic, absurd system that can turn honest hospital administrators and physicians into crooks."

Nearly 20 years ago, Dr. Milton Roemer, of the University of California at Los Angeles, framed his own version of Parkinson's law: Hospital admissions multiply to fill the beds available. Nothing that has happened since has proved him wrong.

The hospitals' empty bed blues inflate costs in another way: They encourage the hospitals to install elaborate and expensive equipment to, in the committee's words, "bolster institutional prestige and...attract physicians to their staffs." Quite simply, the more affiliated physicians, the more patients. What this clinical keeping-up-with-the-Joneses means can be seen from some recent figures cited by Bernard Tresnowski, a national official of Blue Cross. He reported that of 16 open-heart surgery facilities in Philadelphia, only 5 were being adequately used; of 30 megavoltage radiotherapy units—massive installations used to treat cancer—only 10 were being adequately used. Other figures come from a 1975 survey by the Chicago Hospital Council, which found that operating rooms in the city were underutilized to the point where 3 out of 10 were superfluous.

Underutilized equipment is obviously wasteful; it can also be dangerous. The reason is that in surgery or in any other hazardous procedure, the patient's chance of surviving depends heavily on the skill and experience of the doctor and his "team." Just as athletic teams that don't practice regularly lose more games, so medical teams that don't practice regularly lose more patients.

The relationship between practice and risk was spelled out in detail a few years ago by a group of Harvard radiologists who surveyed the diagnostic X-ray procedure called coronary arteriography. In hospitals doing 400 or more arteriographies a year, the risk was very low, with less than one death per thousand patients. But of the 75 percent of the hospitals doing less than 100 arteriographies a year (meaning that their equipment was grossly underutilized), the risk averaged more than eight times as high and in some cases, 50 times as high. In short, three quarters of our coronary arteriography units are (or were) dangerous to our health—as well as being a waste of our money.

The existing figures on underutilized equipment, bad as they are, almost certainly understate the problem, since hospital equipment, like hospital beds, tends to be used because it is there, not necessarily because the patient needs it. This is unquestionably true of operating rooms; Americans undergo a lot more surgery than they need or than is good for them. Early in 1976, a congressional subcommittee estimated the number of unnecessary operations at nearly 2.5 million a year, at a monetary cost of over $3.5 billion—and at a human cost of 12,000 deaths; a study by *The New York Times* reached similar conclusions. The surgeons, of course, were furious; one of them declared that the author of the *Times* article "ought to be horsewhipped."

Though precise figures are, in the nature of things, hard to come by, those that are available indicate that both the subcommittee and the *Times* were a lot more right than wrong. For example, a very careful 1971 assessment of hysterectomies in six New York State hospitals found that 43 percent were unjustified; an equally meticulous review of urologic operations on children concluded that at least 69 percent were unneeded. Other persuasive evidence, like evidence of unnecessary hospitalization, comes from the records of HMOs. For example, in 1966 federal employees enrolled in HMOs had only 56 percent as much surgery as those enrolled in Blue Cross-Blue Shield.

Excess surgery, like excess hospitalization, has been fostered by the third parties, who tend to pay the bill simply on the surgeon's assurance that the operation was necessary. This is not to say that the surgeons are crooks (few are), but merely that they are human and, like the rest of us, sometimes biased by self-interest. As the distinguished senior surgeon George Crile, Jr., puts it, in many surgical decisions "the best interest of the patient is in sharp conflict with the financial interest of the surgeon."

As with hospitalization and surgery, so with laboratory tests and most other health services: Over the years, they have multiplied to soak up the funds available. And with the continued growth of third-party payments, more and more funds *have* become available, so that services have multiplied—and so have the prices of individual services.

Many medical organizations and some economists blame all this inflation not on hospitals and doctors but on "the law of supply and demand." That is, since the demand for health services has increased, the price was bound to go up. This, to speak plainly, is nonsense for at least two reasons. First, increased demand as such has never *compelled* any merchant—or doctor or hospital—to raise prices; the most it has ever


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**More conventional types of fraud include kickbacks from clinical laboratories and billing for nonexistent services; one practitioner billed for six tonsillectomies on the same patient."**

done is allow him to get away with it. Second, in health services *supply has kept pace with demand.* Hospitals, as we have seen, still have more beds and equipment than they need. Doctors are certainly seeing more patients—but they aren't, according to American Medical Association figures, working longer hours. Yet doctors' fees and hospital charges keep going up. Even a modest acquaintance with economic history would have shown that they were bound to do so as long as the people paying out the money felt they were "in no position to do anything but pay the bill."

Why, then, do third-party payers feel like this? The answer—to oversimplify somewhat—can be given in two words: Blue Cross.

Blue Cross—the national association of Blue Cross plans, with some 70 local and regional affiliates—was the pioneering supplier of hospitalization insurance. Despite strong competition from commercial insurance companies, it remains by far the biggest supplier, furnishing about half the total receipts of American hospitals. Its payment policies have influenced those of other insurance plans and have largely determined those of the federal Medicare program, nearly all of whose funds are funneled through Blue Cross and its "twin," Blue Shield.

At its birth in the 1930s, Blue Cross was an independent organization, but it lost that independence almost immediately. National Blue Cross shared directors with the American Hospital Association (AHA); the boards of local Blue Cross plans were controlled by doctors and hospital officials, which as late as 1970 made up an absolute majority of local board members. Of the (largely affluent) minority supposedly representing the public, few showed any inclination to quarrel with the industry majority. And the boards were almost totally self-perpetuating.

Whatever may have been the role of the "public" representatives on the boards, there can be no doubt whatever that the doctors and the hospital officials were, and are, involved in a conflict of interest. On the one hand, they had an obvious interest in raising their own incomes or those of the institutions they represented. On the other, they had an equally obvious responsibility to seek *lower* payments to doctors and hospitals—thereby getting Blue Cross subscribers a maximum amount of care per dollar. Doubtless most of them were honest people; but nobody, no matter how honest, can pursue both these goals at once.

Not very surprisingly, Blue Cross's policy from the beginning was to "pay the bill"—to reimburse the hospitals for whatever they spent. In 1971, the executive director of one local Blue Cross plan was asked by a Senate committee what he would do if an audit of a hospital's books revealed "clearly wasteful practices." His reply: "I am not aware of our audits ever uncovering wasteful charges, and I really wouldn't know what we would do if we ran into them." There is no evidence that other Blue Cross plans were hunting for waste any more vigorously—or had any clearer notion of what they would do if they stumbled on it.

Soon after these hearings, however, Blue Cross and the AHA decided on what one spokesperson called "a more arm's-length relationship." Neither group conceded it had been doing anything wrong, but both decided to stop doing it. Blue Cross now claims that 67 percent of its local board members represent the public—but it turns out that some of these public representatives also happen to be hospital trustees. The net result is that whereas 56 percent of Blue Cross board members had conflicts of interest in 1971, only 44 percent do today.

Blue Cross and AHA still share offices—two halves of a modern building on Chicago's lakefront. They still exchange officials: J. Alexander McMahon, AHA's current president, formerly headed North Carolina's Blue Cross-Blue Shield. The two organizations may be operating at arm's length, but they are still holding hands.

(In fairness, we should note that recently a few Blue Cross plans, often under heavy pressure from state governments, have begun to get a good deal tougher with the hospitals they reimburse. But if some plans have taken one step forward, others have moved backward. Just a few months ago, Michigan's Blue Cross-Blue Shield ousted consumer activist Charles H. Chomet from its board, claiming that he had abused the "privilege" of dissent and had become "counterproductive.")

The same conflicts of interest apply in spades to Blue Shield, which pays doctors for services rendered in the hospital (recently, for some outside services as well). *Half* of Blue Shield's local board members are doctors, and part of the remaining half represent hospitals and other providers of care.

THE COMMERCIAL insurance companies that pay most of the other half of our national hospital bill are not, of course, controlled by the health care industry. But they would have little incentive to query hospital costs, even if they had the means to do so. Their payments (unlike those of Blue Cross) are mostly made to the policy owner rather than to the hospital. If the payment doesn't fully cover the bill, that is the policy owner's problem—which he may, perhaps, try to solve by buying additional insurance coverage.

Given the many incentives for hospital waste and inefficiency and given the weakness of counterincentives when it came to paying the bill, inflation was already embedded in the American hospital system as early as 1950. Indeed, in the following 15 years, the national hospital bill—despite a relatively stable, overall price level—rose by nearly 9 percent a year. It was in 1965, however, that health care inflation really shifted into overdrive, with passage by Congress of the health care act familiarly known as Medicare-Medicaid. The Medicare part provided that the federal government would pay 80 percent of most medical bills for people over 65; Medicaid set up a somewhat similar system for poor people, using a combination of federal and state funds.

Medicare-Medicaid was passed in part because the people wanted it and in part because the hospitals allowed it. Until 1961, stonewalling by the AHA and other industry groups had killed every proposal for any kind of national health insurance. In that year, however, the AHA, feeling, perhaps, that some sort of insurance was inevitable, declared that it would



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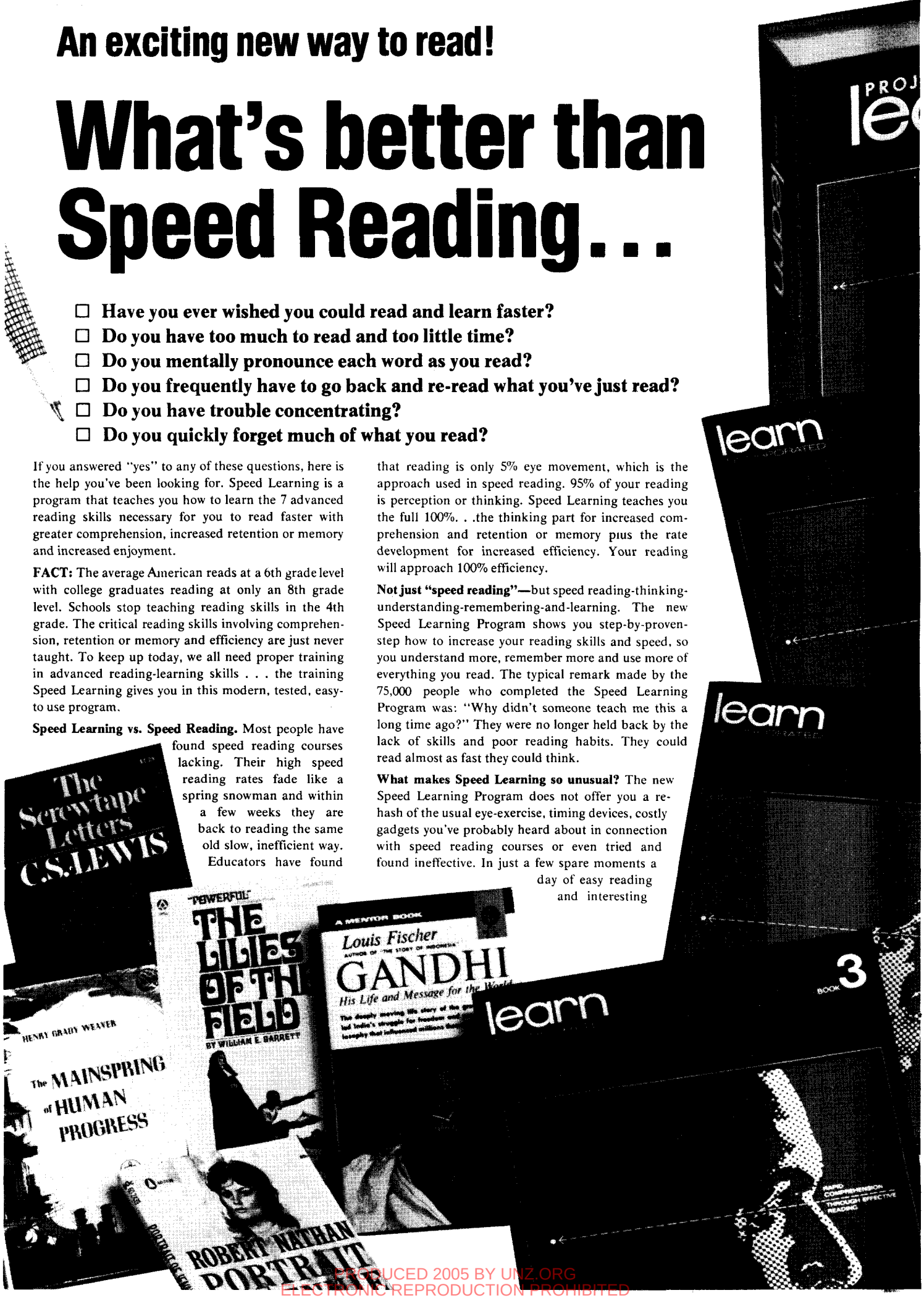


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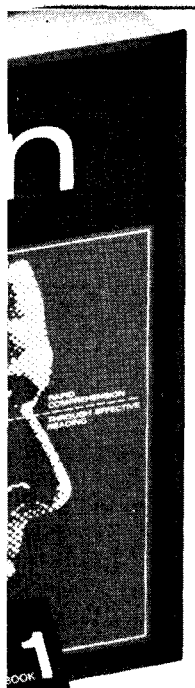
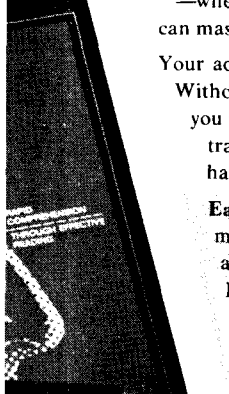
# . . . Speed Learning.



listening, this course teaches you an entirely new way to read and think—a radical departure from anything you have ever seen or heard about.

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**RUSSELL G. STAUFFER,** author and research director of this program, is a Professor of Education and recipient of the H. Rodney Sharp chair in the College of Education at the University of Delaware. He is Director of the Reading Study Center at the University. Dr. Stauffer has published numerous articles in professional and trade journals, including a special pamphlet on "Reading, a Thinking Process" for Reader's Digest.

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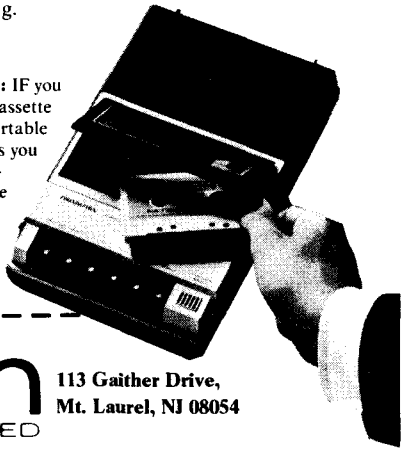

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not object to government insurance for the elderly, *so long as it was administered by Blue Cross*. As finally passed, the law provided that though the government would put up the money for Medicare, the actual payments to hospitals and doctors would be made by "fiscal intermediaries" *selected by the hospitals and doctors themselves*. In practice, this meant Blue Cross and Blue Shield, since nearly all hospitals and doctors picked them as intermediaries. As further assurance for the industry, the bill provided that hospitals would be paid, as before, for their "reasonable costs." The provisions on doctors' payments were even looser, involving (among other things) "prevalent and customary charges."

One might think that Medicare-Medicaid was written the way it was because of high-pressure lobbying by the health care industry. In truth, little pressure was needed. The AHA did, indeed, suggest that it couldn't guarantee hospital "cooperation" without the fiscal intermediary provision (though nobody used the nasty words "hospital strike," at least not in public). But in any case, the congressional leaders were so tickled at getting the bill through without a knockdown battle that they didn't worry too much about the details. After all, hadn't Blue Cross been acting as a sort of intermediary all along, so that it had the know-how? And hadn't it been paying hospitals for their "reasonable costs"? Almost nobody seems to have asked what Blue Cross policies had already done to hospital costs and what they would do when billions in federal and state funds were pumped into an already leaky system.

As soon as Medicare-Medicaid was passed, representatives of the Social Security Administration (SSA) began secret meetings (even Congress was not allowed to see the minutes) with hospital representatives in order to spell out what "reasonable costs" meant. The regulations were made public—supposedly for discussion and criticism—only in May 1966, a bare month before they became effective.

A full account of how SSA's regulations were constructed so as to build a gravy train for the hospitals would fill a book. As just one example, consider the provisions governing depreciation—the money that a hospital, like any other business, must set aside to replace its worn-out plant. SSA allowed hospitals to depreciate the full cost of buildings that had already been partly, or even wholly, depreciated. They could depreciate buildings constructed with federal grants—meaning that the government was paying twice for the same building. They could write off the cost of equipment well before its useful term of life. And so on.

Perhaps most important, hospitals were not required to "fund" their depreciation allowances, to actually set them aside for use *only* in replacing obsolete plants. Instead, they could (and did) use the funds for *additional* buildings and equipment—whose "reasonable costs" then became a ground for demanding still higher government payments.

Hospital costs surged. In the 15 years before Medicare-Medicaid, they had been rising at an average rate of about 9 percent a year. During the five following years, the annual rise averaged over 16 percent. Hospital assets, thanks in part to the "depreciation" funds used for expansion, also surged, from an annual increase of about 9 percent to nearly 15 percent a year. Unsurprisingly, the increase in plant and equipment did *not* increase efficiency. Thus, while the number of patients rose 25 percent between 1965 and 1975, the percentage of occupied beds actually fell slightly.

If the hospitals did well out of Medicare-Medicaid, some of their suppliers did better. For example, the Texas wheeler-dealer H. Ross Perot. In 1964, Perot owned a small data-processing firm, Electronic Data Services, grossing perhaps $500,000 a year. However, he had friends in Texas Blue Cross, whose data-processing department he managed in his spare time, and in politics (he was, or soon became, a good buddy of President Nixon).

In 1965, Texas Blue Cross, disdaining competitive bidding, handed Perot a $5 million contract to do Medicare data-processing. To tool up for this tenfold expansion in his business, Perot borrowed $8 million from the Republic National Bank of Dallas, whose chief executive officer was also, oddly enough, the chairman of Texas Blue Cross. By 1970, Electronic Data Services was grossing nearly $50 million a year—two thirds of it from Medicare and Medicaid work in nine states, and one third of it representing clear profit. Perot's personal fortune had risen to an estimated $1.5 *billion*.

So far as is known, Perot broke no laws. He just knew the right people.

The fees that SSA set for doctors under Medicare were no less lucrative than the hospitals' "reasonable costs." Since Congress had instructed SSA to "consider" the "prevailing and customary" fees currently being paid, the first step was to try to define these rather slippery terms. SSA began by trying—in a remarkably haphazard way—to determine how much doctors were actually being paid.

With this information—accurate or inaccurate—in hand, SSA then set about defining "prevailing and customary." Most of us would consider that these two words, which the dictionary defines respectively as "most frequent or common" and "usual," mean pretty much the same thing and that as applied to doctors' fees,both would be roughly equivalent to the average charge by doctors in a given area. SSA, however, decided that the two words really meant quite different things. The prevailing—most frequent—fee, it decided, would be an amount equal to *or greater than* that charged by 9 out of 10 doctors, and no doctor could get more than that sum.

But even SSA couldn't claim that these prevailing fees were also customary—usual. It thereupon defined a doctor's customary fee as what he had been charging—or said he had been charging—over the preceding six months; Medicare would then pay him 80 percent of that sum, with the patient responsible for the balance.

On the face of it, this didn't look too bad: 9 out of 10 doctors would be paid on the basis of their existing fees, while the tenth would have to accept a lower fee for Medicare patients. However, SSA ignored two vital points. First, there was reason to believe that at least some doctors, well aware that Medicare had become law, had already raised their customary fees in anticipation of a bonanza. Second, there was nothing to stop any doctor from later raising his customary fee and after six months applying for higher Medicare payments. As a result, the customary floor tended to move up to the prevailing ceiling.

Congress had instructed SSA to "consider" the prevailing and customary principle; it had flatly *ordered* it to observe another principle: Medicare fees for a given service must not be higher than fees paid by the same fiscal intermediary for its other (non-Medicare) clients. SSA simply ignored this. When the staff of the Senate Finance Committee examined

*Continued on page 50*


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# ISLANDS!

## An SR Special Section

*Oh, for a year on a deser[illegible]*
*Out in the sheer middle of [illegible]*

ISL[illegible] of the earth, specks of yel[illegible] to be seeded by passing birds [illegible] eventually to be populated by man. The tendrils [illegible] plants start to gether, trap mud and flotsam, and crea[illegible] skeletons of marine life pile one ato[illegible] reefs and islands are formed, to be fought [illegible] of war and visited for recreational refreshment in [illegible] of peace.

For millions of immigrants from [illegible], the first bit of America was not a gold-p[illegible] but the forbidding towers of Ellis Island. "No pr[illegible] difficulties," wrote Irving Howe in *World of Our Fathers*, "produced such overflowing anxiety, sometimes self-destructive panic, as the anticipated test of Ellis Island." To many Cubans escaping Imperial Spain or, later, authoritarian communism, the first American island was often a Florida Key.

Nowadays, when a severe case of the januaries infects the population, islands are a promised antidote of palms and pleasure—West Indian, Bahamian, Hawaiian, Mexican, or even Tahitian.

In the special section that follows, timed for [illegible] when everybody is in need of an island, preferably [illegible] Morgan discourses on personal preferences afloat in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Caskie Stinnett, who decamps to his own island for half of each year, explains the philosophical advantages of being encircled by a moat. C. Northcote Parkinson, at home with the sea, tells why writers need islands. Stanley Karnow ponders the world's islands of contention. Laurence Halley recounts the wonder of an Eastern Santorini, that fragment in the Aegean Sea that may well be the Lost Colony of Atlantis. Judith Morgan is the assembler of a rollicking gazetteer of islands that would titillate explorers from Magellan to Heyerdahl. The house itinerant, meanwhile, turns up on Key West, sniffing our southernmost island for the ghost of Hemingway and the presence of Tennessee Williams.

In all, this collection of essays and illustrations is enough to send anyone packing, as is the nattily dressed assemblage in the primitive painting by Haitian artist Charles Anatole that decorates the cover. —H.S.

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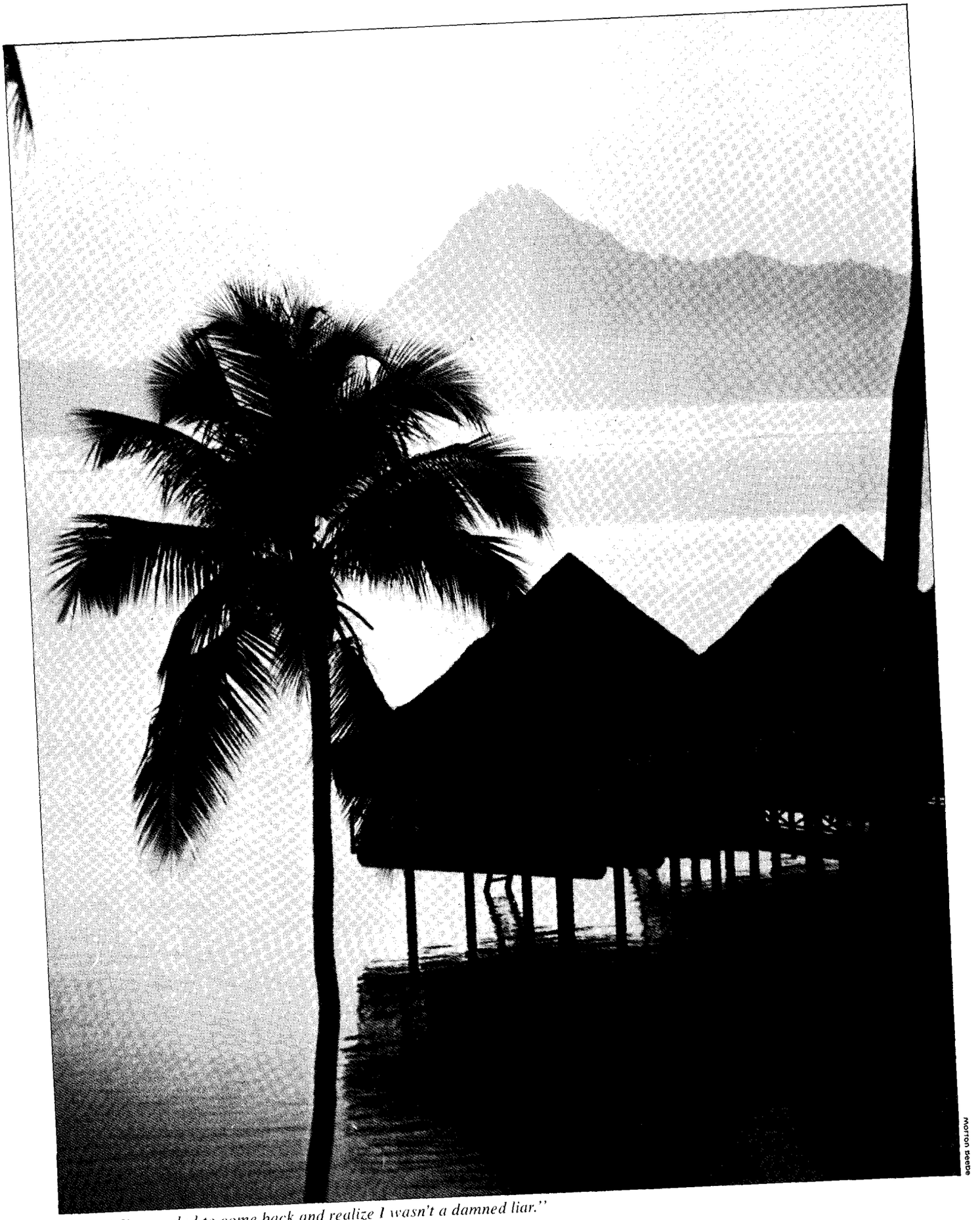

Morton Beebe

*Tahiti–"I'm so glad to come back and realize I wasn't a damned liar."*

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# Daft with Island Love

by Neil Morgan

WHEN Queen Elizabeth II sailed through the Caribbean recently, I was in the neighborhood, but mostly underwater. As she visited islanders who bear some lingering link to empire, I communed with the fish that inhabit my favorite coral reefs and sunken shipwrecks in the British Virgin Islands. If Her Majesty had given audience to me, we might have found a certain commonality. Fleets of parrot fish and sergeant majors were swarming around me curiously, the bolder ones nibbling at my fingers. Barracudas reconnoitered with ominous regularity but did not strike. All closed ranks after I had splashed through, and nothing had changed.

It was much that way, I observed, when the 1,300 people of Virgin Gorda welcomed their queen ashore for an hour to dedicate a small new clinic and to hear island children sing their own hymn extolling the black faces and white beaches and clear green waters of their home island. For months, their elders had sought to exploit the queen's visit as a reason to pave the rutted dirt road that leads from dock to clinic. But that required a bargeload of gravel from St. Croix, and, in the way of islands, it did not arrive. The royal party was cheered along the bumpy parade route and sailed off into another crimson Caribbean sunset.

Like islanders around the world, the amiable elders of Virgin Gorda—those with patchwork names like Creque, Flax, Vanterpool, and O'Neal—do not readily think about the future. When the British withdrew from their Leeward Islands colony 20 years ago, the people of the sparsely settled British Virgins chose to remain under the Crown, which has since spent $2 million or more annually to sustain them. The queen's visit may be her last. Whitehall has set 1981 as the deadline for these islands to manage on their own. That would mean doubling or tripling present taxes. It is a prospect that seemed remote to the islanders as they waited for a bargeload of gravel.

That unpaved road is a bittersweet symbol of island life everywhere. It is both their allure and their burden that islands seem cut adrift from all mainstreams. They are variously primitive, serene, insular, inaccessible, benighted, oblivious, and seductive. For those of us who cherish occasional escape into a quieter life, islands are indispensable. Yet increasingly one recalls the lament of Edna St. Vincent Millay: "There *are* no islands anymore." In the West Indies, the soaring price of oil has exacerbated aching crises: too many people, too few jobs, and a surfeit of improbable dreams. About 20 million people inhabit the Caribbean islands, including Cuba, across a sea that sweeps from Belize to Surinam, from Curaçao to Havana, an area about one third the size of the continental United States. Some islands are important for their bauxite and alumina and for their export refineries. But only tourism spares many former Dutch, French, and British colonies—and Haiti and the Dominican Republic, both long independent—from financial ruin. Each year, mainland tourists leave behind hundreds of millions of dollars.

Yet a placid countenance is usually displayed for the visitor, for the sermon of the tourist dollar is preached widely. Like little Virgin Gorda, many islands are trying to get by on their good looks alone. The Caribbean culture, derived from the African, has advanced hardly further than the steel drum and the primary colors of primitive canvases. Throughout graceful adagios of islands and cays, one finds scrub foliage interrupted by stone fragments of sugar mills and plantation houses and jails, relics of slavery and greed. Yet there is no time to dwell on such history on St. Thomas, where as many as 15 cruise ships a day disgorge passengers to forage among the duty free shops of Charlotte Amalie. "I feel sorry for them," said a black clerk tending bargain Lanvins and Jaegers there one day this winter. "Sometimes they stand in the street waiting for somebody to leave the shop so there'll be room to come inside."

Those who love islands retreat from such madness to outer islands. For me, St. Thomas is only the airport for lovely little St. John, a 20-minute boat ride and a world away. Halfway around the world, Tahiti is clogged with commuter traffic, an odiferous mutation of Gauguin's passionate vision. His long-haired Tahitian girls are cutting their hair short so that it will not tangle in the wheels of their motorbikes. Tourists sit in air-conditioned bars of massive hotels and gossip about Quinn's as though the old saloon still existed. Tahiti is best found in outer islands like Bora-Bora or Raiatéa.

Yet the island spell can override such upheaval. In Papeete, a New York hotel designer sat with a Tahitian wood-carver to negotiate a price for 30 tikis. The first, they agreed, would cost 2,000 Tahitian francs.

"And for the next twenty-nine tikis?"

"They will be more: three thousand francs each," the carver said.

"But why?"

"The first one is fun."

In 1970 I had the joy of accompanying James Michener on his first return to the South Pacific since the appearance of his *Tales of the South Pacific*. As our jet circled to land, I found him alone in the forward lounge, gazing out at a setting full moon and a rising sun, his eyes moist with memories. Days later, at sunset, beside the lagoon of Bora-Bora, he said softly: "I'm so glad to come back and realize I wasn't a damned liar."

Those to whom small islands seem coziest will find good even in their most fearsome traits. One January afternoon I took a boat from Tahiti across the 11-mile channel to Mooréa. At sunset, the wind that Tahitians call the *vero* came screaming out of the west, pushing trees and roofs before it. The bay grew white with foam, and the boat that was to take us back to Papeete that night ducked into PaoPao Bay to ride out the storm. There were not enough beds on Mooréa that night, and as the *vero* built to its shrill crescendo, we were marooned. I enjoyed every drenching


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moment of that soaking experience.

We are an eccentric lot, I suppose, all of us obsessed with islands. For those who cherished certain childhood toys like the box that fits into a box that fits into a box, or the mirrors that multiply image on image, the island within an island is a triumph. I visited one off the Dalmatian coast, spending a night in an old convent inn on an island in the middle of a lake. A ferry took me across the open Adriatic to the island of Mljet. Burros carried me and my bags up a forest trail. Finally a skiff skimmed over the placid lake to my inner island.

Even on large and populous islands, a sense of snug isolation can prevail. One day when black clouds blanketed the alps of New Zealand's South Island and grounded all aircraft, I rented a car and made the long wilderness drive to Milford Sound. There were few other visitors at the inn that night, and the postmaster and I had the bar to ourselves. Before I left the next day, I went to tell him good-bye. He reigned over a white shingled dollhouse with 12 wooden postal boxes painted as bright a blue as the sky above the fjords. On impulse, I rented one. It is a small claim on that gracious island, but it is all I have.

To those already daft with island love, only one achievement may transcend owning an island. I saw it happen once, aboard the *Lindblad Explorer*, in the old East Indies. Hundreds of miles off any major shipping lane, we sought out unexplored reefs and unvisited islands. One day I stood on the bridge with the captain as we circled a winsome island in the Tayandu group. From a cluster of palms, villagers put out toward us in two dugouts. The captain slowed his ship and sent his Indonesian interpreter to the rail to trade gifts for information. Soon we learned that we were standing off the village of Yamtil, on Heniar Island.

The captain gravely drew a yellowed form from a drawer and filled in all that we knew about Heniar.

"This goes to London," he said. "When the next nautical charts are drawn, they will show our lovely little Heniar."

He allowed himself a small, smug smile. It was as close as most men come to discovering an island. ◉

*Neil Morgan is associate editor of the San Diego* Evening Tribune. *His travel column is syndicated by Copley News Service.*

# Of Man and Islands

THE LATIN WORD for island is *insula*, and the word itself breathes the spirit of island life. Here, surrounded on all sides by a protective moat, one is insulated from the grosser absurdities of an irrational world, from the wearisome conflicts of a restless society, from the relentless sweep of a century that often seems more freighted with fear than with hope. The island offers once more the great prize of passionate individualism, a steady constant in a shifting universe. It is no wonder that possession of an island is the central fantasy of man's dreams.

I am thinking of small islands, I suppose, not something as large as Corfu or Cyprus or Hawaii or Sicily. There—on large islands—the problems of the mainland have intruded, and although one is constantly aware of being on an island, some of the delights of island life have been diminished by traffic and noise and commerce. What I have in mind is an island somewhat the size of the one off the coast of Maine, where I spend five months of every year; an island of three-and-a-half acres, heavily wooded with spruce and fir and with thickets of bayberry growing in the open spaces and with a rocky coastline to which mussels and starfish cling. There the mornings are serene and the nights are compounded of stars, and lamplight, and silence that is broken only by the sound of water lapping against the pilings of the dock. Darkness brings mystery, the mysterious blending of wind whispering through the spruce boughs, of woodsmoke hanging in the evening air, of a gull's raucous screech shattering the stillness of the night. Far away, from the mainland, the sound of an automobile horn is borne on the sea wind, but it is muffled and indistinct and seems part of another world.

For reasons that strike me as odd, I am constantly asked if I am not uneasy about living on an island alone and if I am not bored. I feel more protected by the water than I do by the doorman of the apartment house where I live during the winter months, and while I must confess to occasional boredom, I am less frequently bored on the island than in the city. There is always a changing tide to divert me, a fogbank lifting to reveal a lobster boat cautiously working its way through the rock ledges, a totally unbelievable moon lighting up the cove, or a summer thunderstorm that rages with terrifying violence for a few minutes and then subsides apologetically into a rainbow. The man who lives on an island builds his isolation without meaning to, and sooner or later it begins to take possession of his soul; but it brings him a serenity and a sureness, a trust in himself that he may never have known before. Whether he desires it or not, he becomes the monarch of a miniature kingdom, the keeper of peace and the protector of lives, and he soon learns that he must deal with fretful winds and fickle seas and lightning and drought. This, I think, is why most island dwellers are innately humble people: They quickly learn their dependence upon nature, a lesson that is the beginning of wisdom for us all.

Fantasies die slowly on an island, and perhaps the last to succumb is the dream of self-sufficiency. I have never known an island dweller who didn't cling stubbornly to the notion that sooner or later he could cut himself adrift from the rest of the world if he cared to. This is a foolish thought, but it nibbles like mischievous mice at the mind of the true islander, and he derives great satisfaction from contemplating it. True sovereignty is the most wistful dream of all, but it does little harm by occupying one's thoughts.

On an island, the quality of life reflects the tastes of the owner, and the corruptive fallout from the mainland is as great as he will tolerate, and no greater. That fragment of land offers the rare opportunity of creating a world of one's own, and the blame for failure can be pinpointed with terrible accuracy. This is probably the unspoken promise that draws twentieth-century man to islands—not that he wants to run on ahead of the rest of the human race, but quite the contrary, to run back to the beginning and make sure the same mistakes are not repeated. This is the true lure of islands, whether they are large or small.

—CASKIE STINNETT

*Former editor of* Holiday *and of* Travel and Leisure, *Caskie Stinnett is the author of* Grand and Private Pleasures, *published last fall by Atlantic-Little, Brown.*



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# The Compleat Island Collector's Private Gazetteer of Places Offbeat, If Not Outlandish

by Judith Morgan

**Ameland, the Netherlands.** Guided slogs set out on Saturdays from Holwerd on the Dutch mainland for this stretch of offshore sand dunes favored by bird watchers and sunbathers. Mud-walking is a Frisian sport, and Ameland is a half-day squish at low tide. Light canvas shoes recommended; the boat trip at high tide recommended even more.

**Antipodes.** Nobody's there, but this is the stuff of which barroom bets are made and won. The Antipodes group is 450 miles southeast of the South Island of New Zealand. When the crew of the British ship *Reliance* came across these islands in 1800, they thought they were at the end of the British world, and they very nearly were. Hence the name: Drive a stake through the earth from the Antipodes, and it will come out near London.

**Bahrain.** Camel-racing and falconry are leisure pursuits on this sun-scorched Arab island in the Persian Gulf. In the irrigated north are orchards of banana, mango, and pomegranate. Al Manamah is a town of Western shops and native souks. Mean temperature from May to October is 85°F. That's *mean*. Bahrain has less oil than its neighbors, but then, who doesn't?

**Banda, Indonesia.** Too bad kidnapping is a crime. It's the beautiful children of this old Spice Island whom you'll want to take home. The scent of cloves is everywhere, but the international language is clear in the packs of laughing children who follow the occasional visitor around, hugging, babbling, and vying to hold your hand.

**Berlenga.** Twelve rough Atlantic miles off the fishing port of Peniche, these Portuguese islands offer spearfishing in deep grottoes, fine fresh lobster, and a hideaway *pousada* in a reconverted seventeenth-century fort. But Berlenga plays hard to get. The one-hour daily boat trip is often canceled because of high seas.

**Bermuda.** For city dwellers who have yet to meet a polite cabby. Besides being kindly and up on local lore, these taxi drivers know their poinciana from their hibiscus. According to my driver, either season here is wonderful: summertime, or not-quite-summertime. (Christmas falls in not-quite-summertime.)

**Bora-Bora.** When nothing less than perfection will do. Even native singers, who arrive by outrigger at the Hotel Bora-Bora, have perfect half-note pitch for their haunting a cappella hymns, which weave remnants of lost missionary chords with wilder strains of the sea.

**Bouvet Øya.** The ultimate for loners. An uninhabited Norwegian dependency in the South Atlantic, once known as Liverpool Island. The nearest land, also uninhabited, is Queen Maud Land on the coast of East Antarctica, 1,050 miles distant. Try this one on your travel agent.

**Cheung Chau.** For several days in May, this is the site of the Bun Festival, an ebullient happening whose history is short and pleasantly vague. Parades of costumed children, dancers, and magicians, plus a scramble up a 50-foot tower of buns. A short junk ride from Hong Kong harbor.

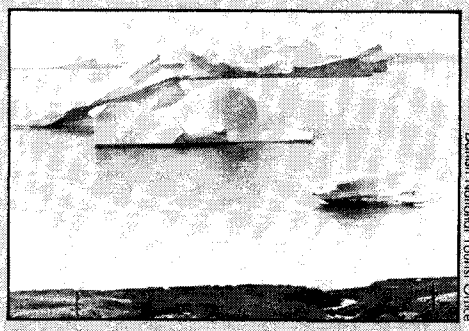
**Christmas.** Try this Central Pacific speck for size. It's the atoll with the largest land area: 94 square miles. At each prong of the pincer-shaped island are the principal settlements, separated by four miles of lagoon. They're named London and Paris.

**Diomedes, Big and Little.** When it's Tuesday in Little Diomede, it's Wednesday in Big. The international date line jogs between. Little D is part of Alaska, but Big D, just three miles away, is Russian. Big D is empty; the Russians evacuated the island not long ago. Bush pilots make the long hop west from Nome to bring supplies and visitors to Little D, just 2.4 square miles in size.

**Enu.** An uninhabited islet in the glittering Indonesian archipelago, best to visit under a full moon. I stood on the beach in silence one silvery night as a giant sea turtle laboriously pulled herself up on the sand to lay her eggs. Then I climbed in a Zodiac to return to the *Lindblad Explorer*, feeling blessed indeed.

**Gotland.** Swedish-owned and operated with verve. In the grand old Hanseatic city of Visby, where the air is sweet with roses and pizza, gray walls of twelfth-century churches rise like Gothic bookends. Good bike paths and rune stones.

**Greenland.** World's largest island. A noble one to fly over, especially at sunset on a westbound jet. Fields of ice become rainbows on the ground as the sun, that wily magician, races ahead to stage the next trompe l'oeil.

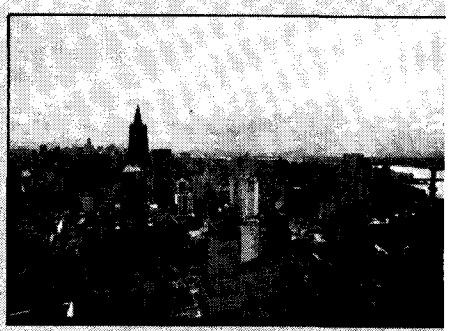


Danish National Tourist Office

*Greenland–"Noble."*

Susan Ochshorn

*Ile St. Louis–"Insular."*



*Manhattan–"Redeveloping."*



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**Ile St. Louis.** No matter one's religion, an island connected by footbridge to Notre Dame Cathedral is a step in the right direction. This haven of seventeenth-century buildings, cozy brasseries, and elegant apartments in the middle of the Seine is so insular that housemaids speak of "going over to Paris." Three tiny hotels and the world's greatest ice-cream store, all along the lively main street.

**Ilha de Marajó, Brazil.** Wedged in the mouth of the Amazon, this steamy island (the largest freshwater island) is the size of Switzerland, but the climate is something else. Hot. To the south is Belém; to the north, the equator. The equator feels closer.

**Isla Coronados.** Shaped like a stingray, this island off Loreto in Mexico's Baja California is inhabited by an occasional osprey perched atop a cardon cactus, by honking sea lions, by fractious gulls, and by Sally Lightfoot crabs with shells like gleaming cloisonné. Soft sand beaches shelter the clear waters of the Gulf of California. Federally owned, but no law prevents spending a day with picnic and camera.

**Mafia.** An island that deep-sea fishermen can't refuse. Good snorkeling for the rest of the family here on the edge of the continental shelf, about 80 miles southeast of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Swahili name is Chole.

**Manhattan.** A small U.S. island undergoing constant redevelopment. Concrete, steel, and glass rise higher than palm trees. Great place to catch the subway to Brooklyn, on neighboring island of Long, and dine on soft clam bellies at Gage and Tollner's.

**Manitoulin.** The largest lake island, 1,068 square miles, in the Ontario section of Lake Huron. On its Manitou Lake, there are several islands for those fanatics who like islands within islands.

**Mykonos.** White as a tumble of sugar cubes, this Greek island outdazzles the best. Maybe because it was flung into the Aegean by Poseidon himself. Maybe because local law requires that houses and windmills have two coats of paint each year. A chilly winter is the real blessing from the gods. That's when islanders handloom the bright fabrics and knit the sweaters they sell to visitors from May to October.

**St. John.** This beauty mark in the U.S. Virgins is two-thirds national parkland because Laurance Rockefeller wanted it kept the way he saw it in 1952. Worth the trip to see a national park without crowds or traffic jams. Gaudy parrot fish entertain yearround at Turtle Bay. If you rent a jeep to explore the island, remember to drive on the left.

**Scilly Isles.** The *c* is silent, but the ocean roars here off the Cornish coast, near where the English Channel meets the Atlantic and the Irish Sea. The islands are subtropical and famed for their flowers. To the windblown visitor, that's more than silly; that's ridiculous.

**Sea Island.** A Georgia enclave for those who love golf or want to learn to speak the President's language. It lies off Brunswick, and golfers find it an easy air commute to the Augusta Master's. The Cloister, an elegant vacation compound of private cottages and public lodging, is celebrating its fiftieth birthday, and anyone who's ever paused there wishes it many happy returns.

**Seychelles.** Heaven in the Indian Ocean. Creole cooking, soccer, squash games, rare birds, super skin diving. Much of Mahé, largest of over 80 islands, is ringed in coral. The airport was built in 1972, and now there are movies every night; but don't listen to anybody who tells you the Seychelles are ruined.

**South Island.** Here in New Zealand, mannerly cities and rude wilderness live in peaceful coexistence. Don't get pushy. Fluffy sheep rule the roads, and fluffy clouds rule the skies. Travel by car or plane is subject to their whims. By any means, go west and listen to the silence of Milford Sound.

**Sveti Stevan.** A fifteenth-century pirate village converted into a country hotel on Yugoslavia's Adriatic coast. The ancient walls are the same; only the interiors have been changed to protect the innocent tourist. Atop the mound of pine and rock is a church where ropes hang from two bells. Legend says that the person strong enough to ring the big bell will return. In fact, I learned that the rogue who rings that bell after midnight may be asked to move on.

**Tahiti.** Best as a departure point for Mooréa, Bora-Bora, and others of its betters in the Society group. Art Buchwald put things in perspective on his first visit to Papeete: "One thing L.A. wins hands down. There are lots more bare breasts in L.A."

**Tristan da Cunha.** In the South Atlantic, this is the most remote inhabited island in the world. Because of volcanic activity in 1961, its residents were evacuated to England. But about 200 of them came home again in 1963. Nearest known neighbors are on St. Helena, 1,320 miles northeast. Has its own postage stamp, but who cares to write?

**Vancouver.** North of the tidy teacups and bone china and tartans of the city of Victoria, this Canadian island becomes a forest wilderness larger than Belgium. Slapping-good sailing water. Seaplanes land on isolated lakes to drop off fishermen and campers. It's Outward Bound for adults. ◉

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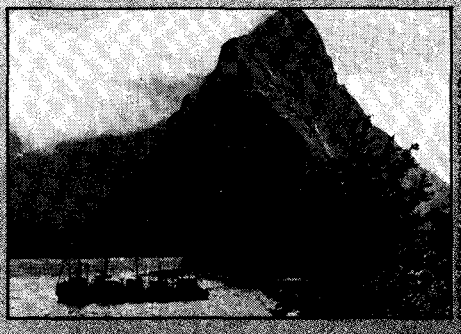
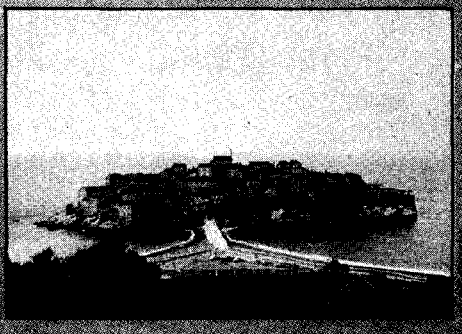
*Judith Morgan's travel column appears in newspapers in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego.*

*Scilly Isles—"Flowery."*



*South Island, N.Z.—"Fluffy."*



*Sveti Stevan—"Ancient."*

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# Easter on Atlantis

by Laurence Halley

SANTORINI in the Greek islands. The timetable had predicted arrival at 6:00 P.M., but Greek ferries, thank God, have nothing in common with Mussolini's trains. Yanni, a deckhand, had gone ashore at the previous stop. We simply had to wait until his inalienable conjugal rights, punctuated by repeated, frowning blasts from the ship's horn, had been properly exercised. Yanni, looking smug, had returned three hours late to ironic cheers from the crew.

And thus we arrived by night. Gray-white pumice floated in the quay water under the crater wall. As the taxi chugged over the rim to the high ground, we passed through a hundred-foot layer of pure white sand, glittering under the first full moon of spring. The sand is Santorin earth, since Roman times, the base material of underwater cement.

Pumice, Santorin: voidings of the earth's crust, burying civilizations.

On the evidence, there seem to be two hotels in the main village. The smarter, with its delicious Italianate air, remained arbitrarily, inexplicably shut, leaving the owner of the scruffier Greek one with an overbooking problem more familiar perhaps to international airlines. In our case this was serious: two Greek couples, one Anglo-French couple, six assorted children, and two tired grandparents. The Greek response was instructive. Not here patrician indifference and the suggestion that it was perhaps our fault. Instead, manic improvisation and a welcome tactile in its warmth. Two-fisted handshakes all round, a flashing gold-toothed smile, the gathering of the family bearing sweet coffee. Somehow, enough rooms were found.

By morning the bedroom shutters raged and rattled. A storm had swept down during the night, turning the Aegean into a caldron of iron-gray water. The gale, banging into the crater wall, fractured off into miniature tornadoes skittering away across the lagoon, 30-foot waterspouts trailing behind. Away they went, out over the pile of black cinders in the center, out to the two white islands bounding the horizon. The balcony of our room was a crow's nest looking 1,200 feet below into the seething water, itself another 1,500 feet deep.

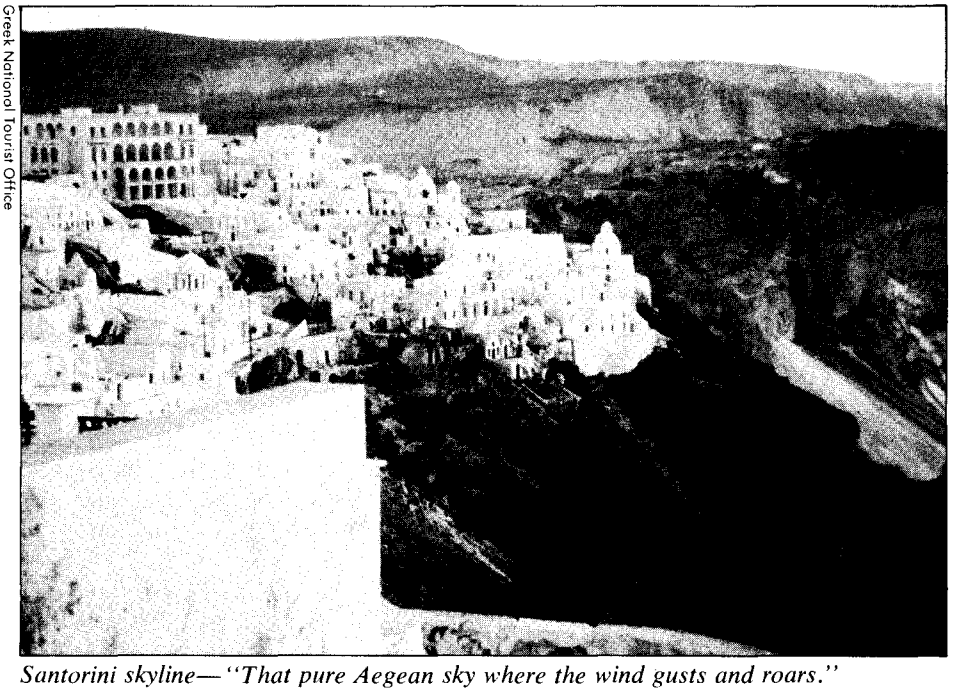
Clinging to the rail, we were gazing down into the remains of the ancient caldera, a volcanic crater.

Recent archaeological opinion postulates the existence in historic times of a great mountain, an extinct volcano, covering most, if not all, of the present lagoon's 32 square miles. And there the civilization of Minoan Crete flourished in all the glory of the Middle Bronze Age: the architecture of palaces; wall paintings; finely worked pottery, from tiny figurines to storage vessels the height of a man. Doubtless the inhabitants considered this to be the natural order of things; but meanwhile, water continued to seep through fissures in the sea floor into the smoldering chambers underground. There must have been warnings of the unimaginable pressures below—growlings, bellowings, the rattling of bars. On neighboring Crete there was the strange ritual of bull-vaulting, perhaps to propitiate the great bull Minotaur, snorting, shaking the sides of his underground prison. Centuries later, the legend persisted of 12 youths and 12 maidens brought each year from Athens as a sacrifice to the Minotaur until Theseus, aided by Ariadne, slaughtered him in his stall.

Warnings or not, the catastrophe that eventually came in about 1450 B.C. was on a scale unknown in recorded history. The mountain exploded, releasing cubic miles of pumice, lava, ash. The outpourings went on for months, perhaps even decades, eventually leaving a huge, ringing vacuum under the earth into which, in the space of a few hours, most of what remained of the mountain crumpled, imploded 1,500 feet below sea level. The sea poured in, rebounding in successive walls of water at least 600 feet high. On the Lebanese hills, pumice has been found a hundred or more feet above present sea level—the edge, the outermost reach, of the flood.

I, for one, am convinced that in this lies the secret of Atlantis, which, in Plato's words, disappeared into the depths of the sea in a single day and night of misfortune. Some believe that Santorini is itself Atlantis; others, that the legend recalls more generally the greatness of Bronze Age Crete, destroyed by walls of water from the north. I cannot judge; but no other convincing explanation exists for the apparently simultaneous collapse of the palaces of Crete, so vast as to be immune from the destructive impulses of man until, alas, our own day. And I have always been skeptical of the claims made for Theseus face-to-face and underground with the Minotaur, breaker of thrones.

All that is left can be seen from the crow's nest in the storm: the great empty lagoon in its nestling islands and, in the



Greek National Tourist Office

*Santorini skyline—"That pure Aegean sky where the wind gusts and roars."*



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**Author of WRITER'S UTOPIA FORMULA**

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I sell everything I write, not for *pennies* per word, but for *dollars per word!* It isn't my writing ability that earns the money, it's my unique approach to selling what I write ... ***and knowing what to write about.*** And yet it's true, the greater your gift with words, the greater your chances for success with my formula. I only point up my limited talents to illustrate how much better *you* might do with my system if YOU apply it. If you have any talent for writing at all, you are probably better equipped than I was when I started.

**Now the best part of it is that the field I write in is absolutely unlimited! There is no way we could over-crowd the field even if we *all* started marketing our writing in this unique manner.**

I've written a book describing this method of writing for profits. I call it the *WRITER'S UTOPIA FORMULA REPORT.* On pages 28 thru 32 I tell about several people who were flat broke only a few short years ago but are extremely wealthy now. Each made it by applying only the fundamentals in my system.

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## A personal message from Beverlee Buchanan

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center, the black cinders of rebirth.

Later in the day we follow the long galleries of a mine leading to the old Minoan city, with its streets, outer walls of houses, staircases, and cellars crammed with storage jars for oil, seed, and wine. On the floors above, the walls are covered with murals, fresh as the day they were painted. Deer, birds, butterflies, against a background of empyrean blue, buried forever below that pure Aegean sky where the wind so incongruously gusts and roars.

And in the evening, the rituals of the Orthodox Church, most tenacious of all the thought systems that at one time or another have taken root in the ashes. The midnight mass for Easter. Incense, the shaking of bells behind the altar screen. The faithful stand about, candles in hand. The children, irrepressible, giggle in corners, pick their noses, jostle. Distracted mothers tug and preen. Boy Scouts on their best behavior add a touch of alien solemnity of their own.

The screen doors open and we fall silent. The celebrant emerges from a crowd of acolytes. Christ is risen, he intones. We reply: God be thanked. There is further stage business before we pour into the square and follow the elevated crucifix through the streets, our voices raised in hymns of thanksgiving composed in the earliest years of the Byzantine Empire. The storm is masked by the narrow alleyways, but at the corners our candles gutter, extinguish. Afterward there is the traditional breakfast, a thick soup brewed from the entrails of the paschal lamb. The hotel owner and his sons dance to the bouzouki; our children one by one drop from their perches into waiting mothers' laps. I have never been happier in my life; this surely is permanent, the beauty of humankind mystically linked with the generations gone before.

The villagers know better. In the fields about, there appear to be fresh scarecrows, wicker men built of plaited straw, dancing in the wind like corpses on gibbets. Two thousand years of clerical disapproval have failed to eradicate a ritual the villagers know in their hearts to be necessary propitiation to the brooding forces of mischance.

For the dark cycle is continual, without rest. In 1925 there was a fresh outpouring into the middle of the lagoon, joining together two smaller islands similarly created in the eighteenth century. There among the cinders we see three miniature craters smoldering quietly away until the next convulsion. The fishermen, practical as always, moor their boats in the lee, letting the sulphur burn away the barnacles. And in 1956 the main island shook again, causing ancient, weathered rocks and the houses above to slide down, down into the dark water.

Modern architects from Athens, with that eternal, touching Greek optimism, have rebuilt Santorini in blazing-white concrete in the hope that new technology can resist the next awakening of the great subterranean bull. The result, undeniably pleasing, is the Greece of the travel posters. It could be anywhere: Benghazi perhaps, or the Tunis of the *colons*.

But in the storeroom of an old Venetian palace teetering above the water, we gaze into the future. In a space as cavernous as a cathedral, a lopsided mound of ocher-colored dust, higher than a house, poised to resume. ◉

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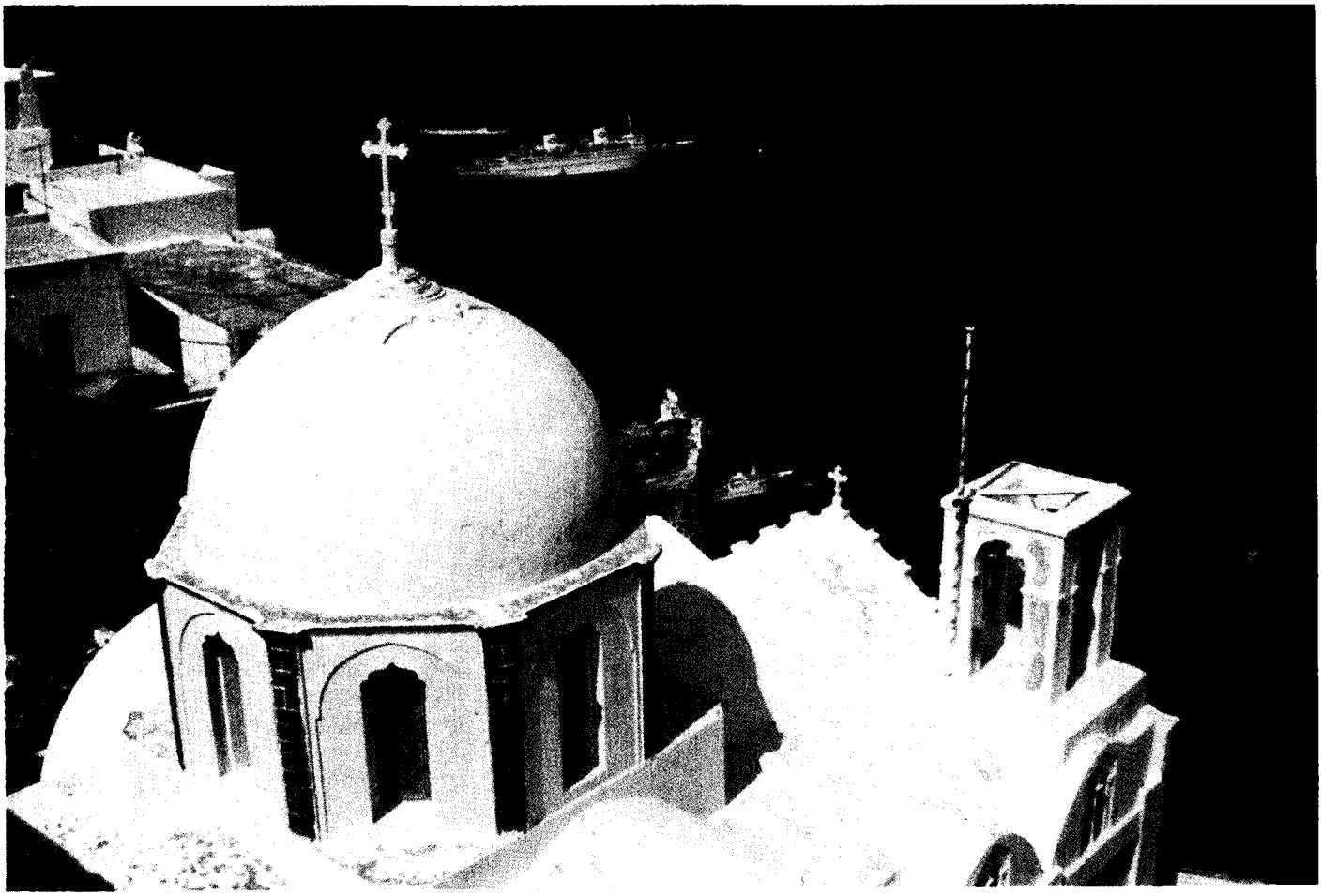
*Laurence Halley's novel* Simultaneous Equations *will be published in the United States by St. Martin's Press.*

Greek National Tourist Office



*A ship calls at Santorini—"The balcony of our room was a crow's nest looking 1,200 feet below into the water, itself 1,500 feet deep."*



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# Key West, the Living End

by Horace Sutton

THE SUN goes down in a triumph of celebration here on the tail end of America. The ritual would be worthy of the birthday of the Dalai Lama, only in Key West it takes place every day. Crowds jostle for space on Mallory Dock, watching the changing colors in the sky. The descent of the ball into the sea is often accompanied by cheers as well as by ritualistic chants offered by clients of an order that sees some religious omen in so fiery an evidence of the close of a day.

For an even better view, one can board the Conch Plane of Air Tortugas a half hour before sunset, fly over the reef, the Gulf Stream, and across the lakes that were the hideaway of the rumrunners, and land in the harbor in front of the ritualists on Mallory Dock. The takeoff is into the sunset, the plane turning to land at the airport as the lights are coming on in this outpost 120 miles at sea.

Meanwhile, back on the terrace of the new Pier Restaurant at the very end of Duval Street, less religious celebrants seated there can view the spectacle filtered through the rigging of the shrimp boats tied up along the side of Mallory Dock. Sailboats slither noiselessly past the railing of the terrace while the assembled guests are attended by waiters fetching draughts of piña colada and platters of shrimp that have been boiled in beer.

To Harry Truman, Tennessee Williams, Dwight Eisenhower, Ernest Hemingway, and David Wolkowsky, Key West was always the ultimate island. Truman visited here 11 times while he was President, staying in protected naval quarters but sauntering out to take morning constitutionals. Tablets mark where he stopped for coffee.

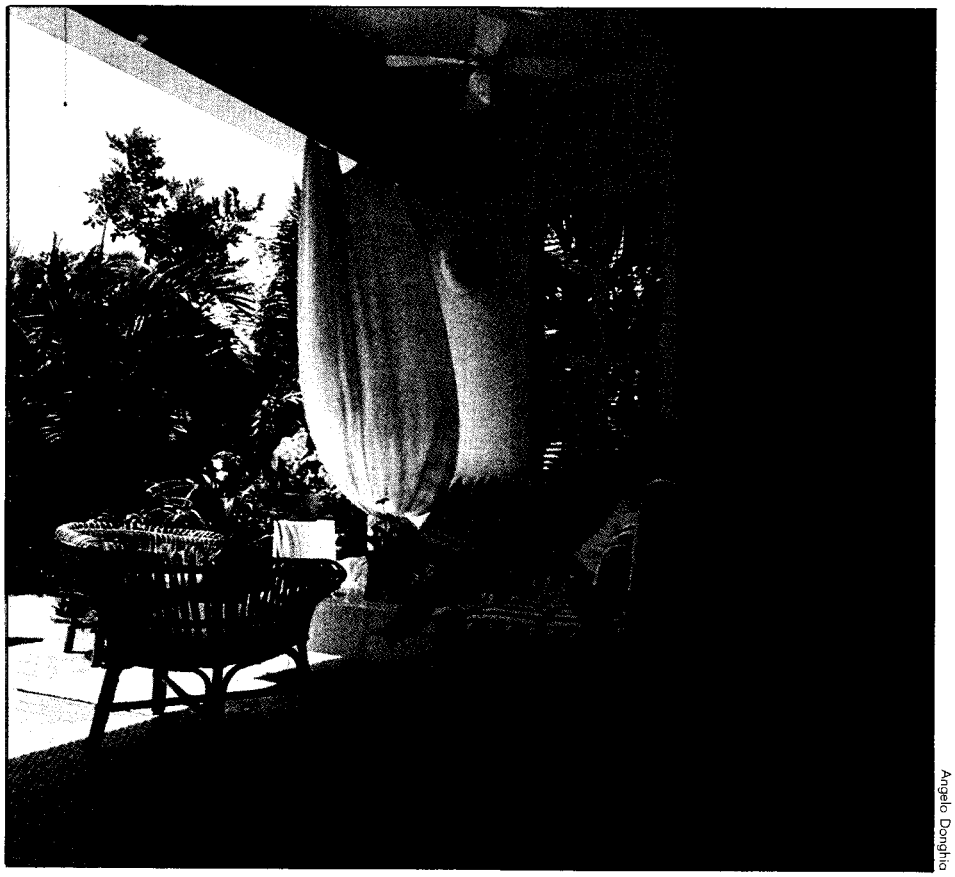
Hemingway bought a fine garden house in 1931, lived in it for years with his second wife, Pauline, mother of Patrick and Gregory, and did some of his best work and best drinking and best fishing on this fingertip of land. Wolkowsky, who had emigrated from Key West, where he was born of Russian émigré parents, fashioned a career in urban restoration in Philadelphia. He returned here in 1965 and now operates the Pier House and its restaurant and functions as a sort of conférencier between visitors and the assorted artists in residence.

Those who were born in the keys are called conchs, after the mollusks that inhabit the characteristic pink shell found in these parts. A longtime resident who suffers the inescapable indignity of having been born off the keys might, after seven or eight years here, aspire to be called a "freshwater conch."

In Key West there is a Conch Train, a long linkup of sightseeing cars pulled by a propane-powered jeep masquerading as a miniature railway engine. A running commentary on the flora, fauna, and eminent figures flows in a glib recitation from the driver during the course of a winding tour. The Conch Train dabbles in history, courses past the rococo facades of Cuban clubs, chugs by the end of U.S. Route 1, slips past the southernmost point in the nation, and glides by the Key Wester Inn and the Key Ambassador, motels facing the Atlantic and thus handy to Smathers Beach, a stretch of public sand named after the former Florida senator who was a congressional sidekick of John Kennedy's.

The Conch Plane that flies the daily sunset trips also makes excursions to the Dry Tortugas that stretch westward into the Gulf from the tip of Key West. On Fort Jefferson, desiccating in the sun, the government, which held these waters all through the Civil War, imprisoned Dr. Samuel Mudd, the physician who set the leg of John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin.

A singular relic in Key West is the conch



Angelo Donghia

*Angelo Donghia's restored conch house—"A quaint weave of architectural threads."*



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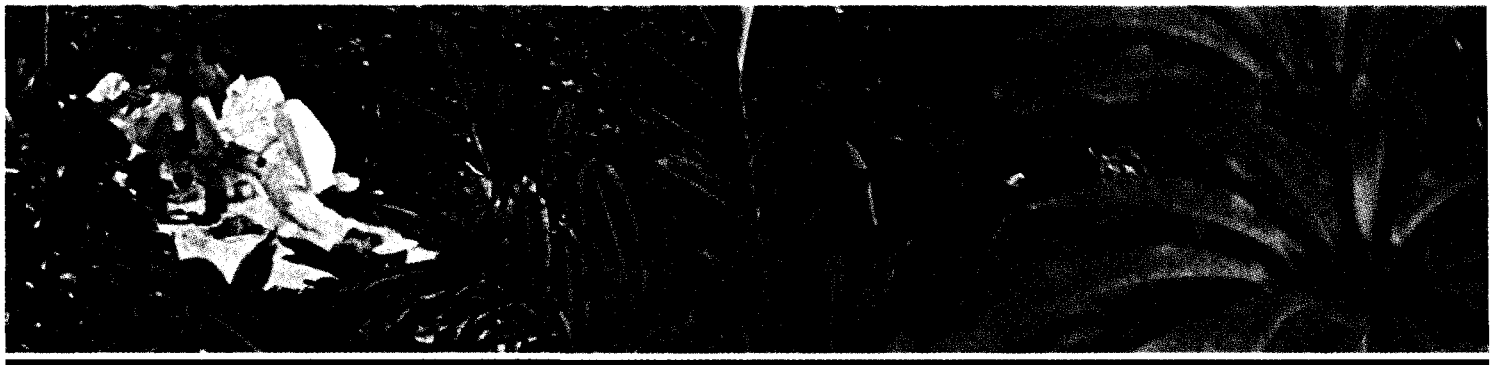

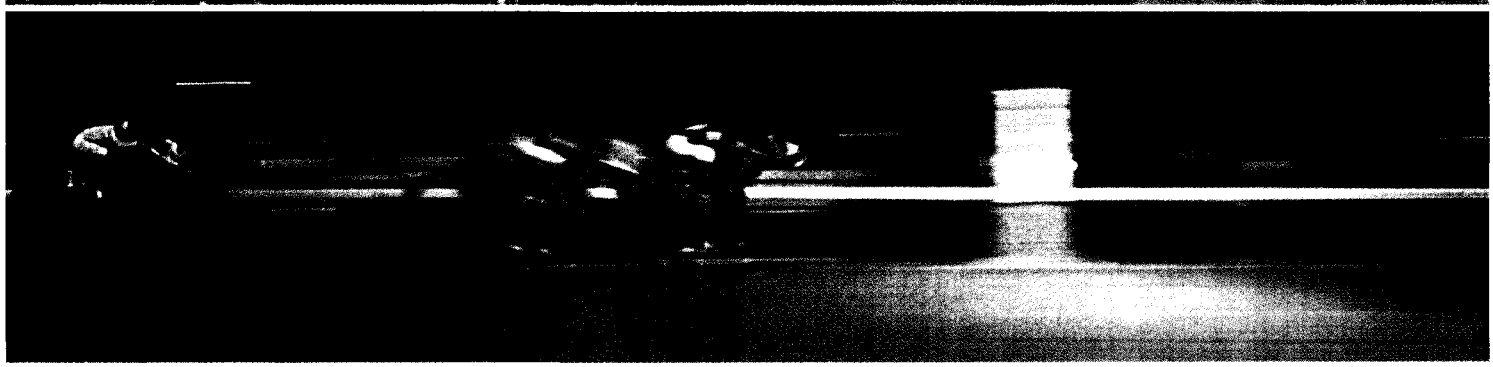

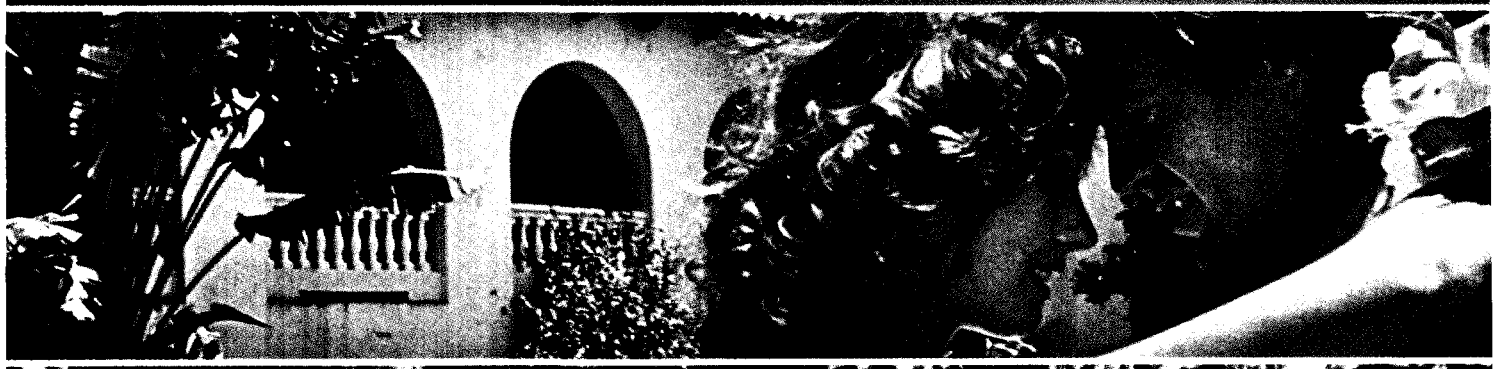

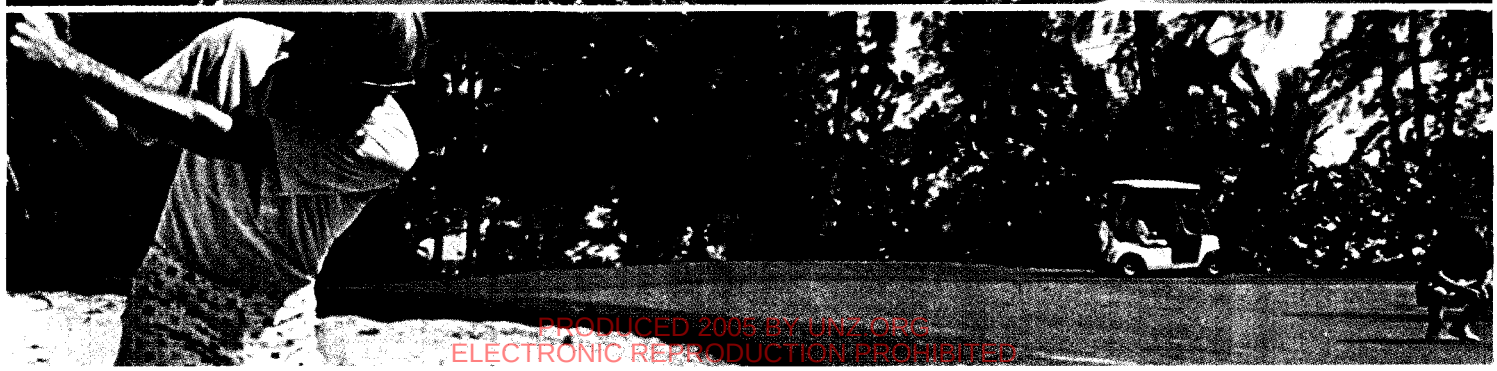

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house, a quaint weave of architectural threads that can be traced variously to the Bahamas, to Spain, to New England, or to Victorian England. Girt with balustrades, festooned with the gingerbread of wooden bunting, crowned with widows' walks, conch houses were built of resinous pine by ships' master carpenters. As it hardens with age, the pine resists the gnawings of termites. Fastened with wooden pegs, equipped with square rooftop hatches called scuppers and with steeply pitched roofs, conch houses can resist insect borings, they can hold steady in a hurricane, promise relief from the tropical sun, and deliver rainwater into cisterns. It was not until World War II that fresh water was piped from the mainland.

It has lately become stylish to buy and restore conch houses. A superchichi showpiece is the late-Victorian house on Eaton Street that has been redone by New York designer Angelo Donghia. A hippie flophouse when he found it, Donghia sanded it, stripped it, then redid it in a welter of wicker, ceiling fans, zebra rugs, straw, and bamboo. Planted only a year and a half ago, the garden that leads to the pool is already a contained jungle of papyrus, pomegranate, cactus, pandanus, and palm.

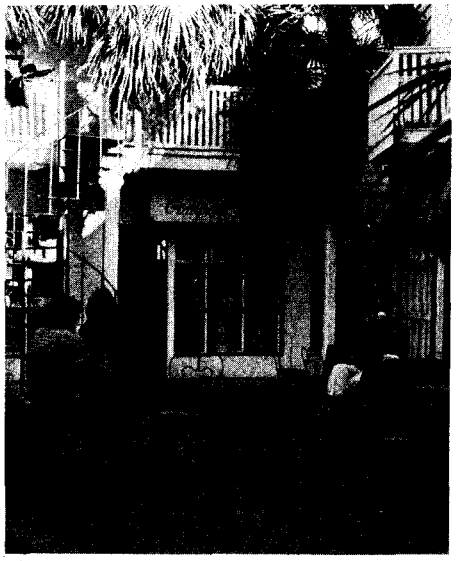
The first artist to put up in Key West was James Audubon, who arrived in 1832 to make sketches for *Birds of America*. The Audubon House is, so goes a testimonial from Tennessee Williams, who himself occupies a modest cottage, "not like a museum or a movie set, but as true and authentic as Keats's house by the Spanish Steps in Rome."

Nearly a century later, Dos Passos hitchhiked through the keys, taking the railroad that had been built by Henry Morrison Flagler, the financier who had earlier struck it rich with John D. Rockefeller and then had sunk $50 million in Florida hotels. The roadbed was not yet complete between all the keys and Dos Passos wrote that Key West "really was an island." It was linked by car ferries to Havana. Wrote Dos Passos:

> There was shipping in the harbor. The air smelt of the Gulf Stream .... Cigar factories had attracted a part-Cuban part-Spanish population.... The English-speaking population was made up of railroad men, old Florida settlers, a few descendants of New Englanders from the days when it was a whaling port, and fishermen from ... the Bahamas.

That was enough to attract Hemingway, who arrived by way of La Rochelle, France, and Havana, and soon, as Carlos Baker has written, "fell... into a work-and-fishing schedule precisely suited to his temperament...." The house that he eventually bought and kept until his death is now on public view. The 42 cats in residence descend from those who shared the house with Ernest and Pauline. A swimming pool, the centerpiece of the garden, was built by Pauline at a cost of $20,000, when Ernest was off covering the Spanish civil war. Embedded in the concrete decking is the penny Ernest allegedly fished from his pocket after he heard the price, the writer saying, "Here, you might as well have my last cent."

It is only a walk to Sloppy Joe's, a favorite Hemingway saloon in the days, says Baker, "when the bars along Duval Street roared each night with rumba music and the fistfights of merchant sailors." Parachute silk covers the ceiling nowadays, and tile covers the floor. Burnished conchs with beards and long hair tied in ponytails sip beer served in cans that—to avoid chilling the customers' fingers—are placed in canisters of woven pandanus. Ordering a glass is considered a gaffe worthy of day trippers.



*Palmy patio–After Hemingway, the deluge.*

Cubans first came to Key West during the struggle for independence from Spain, and it was here that José Martí, the Cuban patriot, grouped his adherents to plan the revolution that would eventually separate Cuba from Spain and that would result in the Spanish-American War. The battleship *Maine* sailed from Key West harbor only to be blown up in Havana. Her dead are buried in the Key West cemetery.

The island was the beneficiary, for a time, of a large Cuban cigar industry, much of which, after a devastating fire, moved to Tampa. One lone cigar roller, now eighty-four, sits in a small shop, fashioning panatelas (50 cents each) and El Hemingways (65 cents), using tobacco grown in Latin America by Cubans from Cuban seed.

The small Spanish restaurants survive, too. El Cacique, neat, fluorescently lighted, and paved in Formica, may not look elegant, but it provides agreeable *picadillo*, black beans and yellow rice, fried plantains and green plantains, and milk shakes that come in such flavors as mango, coco, zapote, and piña. A dish of *moro*, *puerco*, and *yuca*, that is, beans, pork, and a type of cactus vegetable, costs a modest $2.95. Dinner for two recently, without so luxurious a dish, was under $6.

The raucous bars of Duval Street have been replaced by the likes of El Cacique and by such agreeable places as The Deli, Mother Nature's, The Fudge Factory, and Tutti & Frutti's—tourist dells, all. One dines in style at Number 1 Duval Street, a nineteenth-century shipping office that has become the handsome Pier Restaurant. No dinners for two under $6 here, but the whole yellowtail sautéed in black butter is a Florida masterpiece, and as much goes for the Pier's key lime pie, which comes with a snowdrift of meringue on its roof.

The Overseas Highway, stretching over 120 miles of islands and causeway, is a fascinating trip in some parts and a bottleneck of construction in others. Air Sunshine, which uses reupholstered DC-3s—that's right, DC-3s—threads its way from Key West to as far north as the Kissimmee Airport, serving Orlando. If ever there is a relaxation of tension between Washington and Havana, a political circumstance that hangs on Castro's overseas adventures, there may be service from Key West to Cuba. That is the ultimate gambit for a number of airlines that have filed for additional service into Key West. There is nothing really new about *that* linkup. In October 1927, 50 years ago last fall, a young adventurer named Juan Trippe, only recently out of Yale, sent the first flight of Pan American Airways winging out of Key West, bound for Havana.

Casa Marina, a hotel of those times, long dormant, is said to have caught the interest of the Marriott Corporation and may come to life again, too. Two new hotels seem certain to be planted on this small atoll, one to be built on the Gulf in front of the A. & B. Lobster House, a popular feeding station for visitors down to catch fish and eat them and to inhale the seedy tropicality of this last stepping-stone of continental America. ◉



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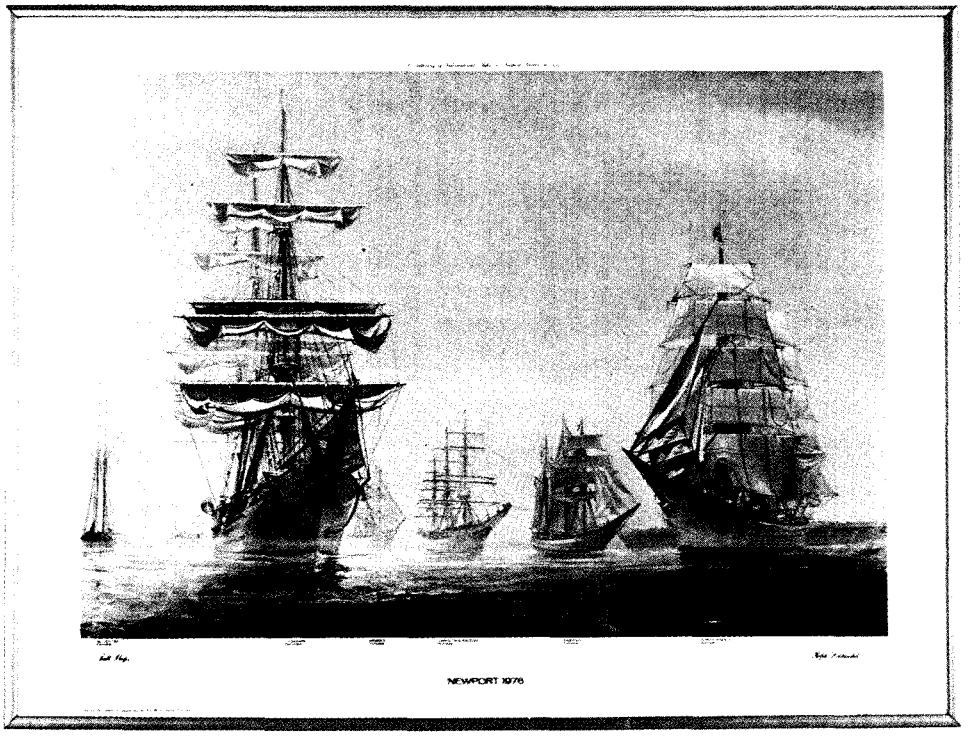


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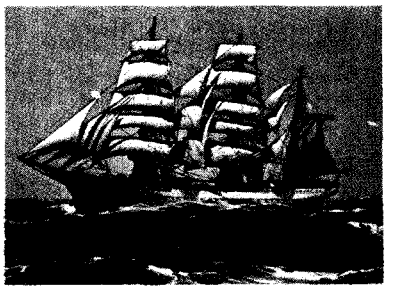

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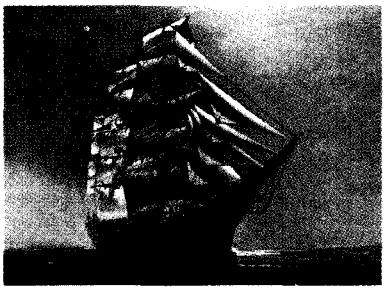

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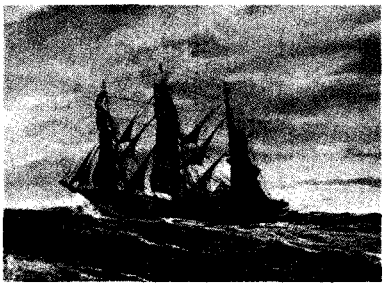

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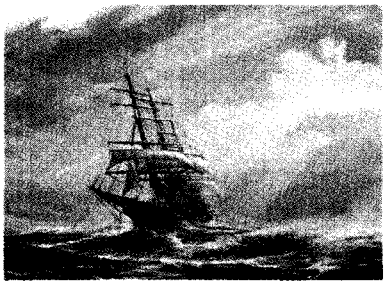

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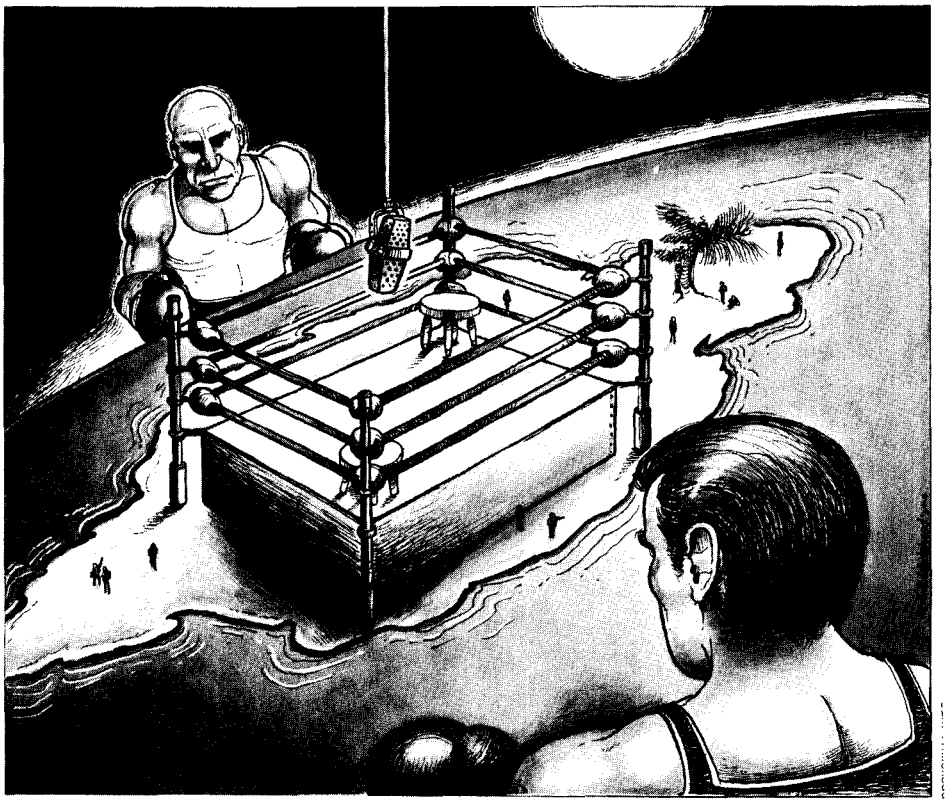
# Islands of Contention

by Stanley Karnow



ISLANDS may be ideal vacation spots, but they are also often political arenas. It could be that their insularity breeds tensions. Or it could be that they are the objects of contention for rival mainland powers. But whatever the reason, Cuba, Jamaica, Corsica, Cyprus, Diego Garcia, Taiwan, and other islands are chronic news makers, and as such, they are to be visited with notebook in hand.

Americans have been especially transfixed by Cuba ever since Fidel Castro created a Communist regime a mere 90 miles from the Florida coast. Within recent months, President Carter has been trying to establish a new link with Cuba, but progress has been uneven.

Carter made it plain when he entered office that a fresh look at Cuba would be high on his agenda. In February, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance described the United States boycott of Cuba as "ineffective," adding that "we ought to seek ways to remove impediments to normal relations." These statements of intention were translated into small but significant steps, such as the dropping of restrictions on travel to Cuba by Americans—which led to visits by congressmen, businessmen, some South Dakota basketball teams, and several cruise ships.

Lately, though, the developing connection has been strained by the role of Cuban troops and military advisers in Africa, where they are apparently acting as Soviet surrogates. An estimated 20,000 Cubans are based in Angola, and increasing numbers of them are said to be moving into other parts of the continent, notably Ethiopia. So it seems that Castro has chosen to pursue his revolutionary vocation, even at the risk of jeopardizing his incipient ties with the United States, and this promises to set back the prospects of a deal with Carter. It may be a long time, therefore, before Americans can count Cuba among the Caribbean islands on which they can bask in the sun.

Last summer, when Andrew Young, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, toured the Caribbean, a key purpose of his journey was to counter the spread of Cuban influence in the region by reassuring



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the governments that they were not being forgotten by the Carter administration. One of Young's stops on the tour was Jamaica, where Prime Minister Michael Manley's socialist government has shown a degree of sympathy for Castro. Young sought to put a different face on Manley, referring to him as "one of the most intelligent and independent leaders in the world." The United States initiative, as undertaken by its U.N. ambassador, was part of a broader program, now gathering momentum in Washington, to furnish the Caribbean with more American aid for dealing with its economic problems. The aim of the exercise is to demonstrate that the United States can bring about more change than the Communists in the way of reform, and this has set in motion a race between Carter and Castro. Each is striving to demonstrate that his concern for the Caribbean is greater than that of the other. The direction Manley takes may indicate which way the wind is blowing. At the moment, it appears to be shifting back and forth.

In Corsica, a lovely spot in the Mediterranean, a recent survey suggests that a majority of Corsicans favor more autonomy from the French. Some French officials fear that Corsica may become another Ulster. The real danger, though, is that the Corsican separatists may join with similar Breton and Basque movements in order to nibble away at French unity.

Another troubled spot in the Mediterranean is the beautiful island of Cyprus, which has been in turmoil since it was invaded by the Turks three years ago. I traveled around the island at that time, looking at ruined resorts in places like Famagusta and Kyrenia. The Turkish Army still occupies the rich northern tier of the island, and despite the long and tedious negotiations that have been going on at the United Nations and elsewhere, virtually no headway has been made between Turkey and Greece, the two claimants to the place, in reaching a compromise. Thus Cyprus, which lies like a jewel in the blue Mediterranean, remains in political limbo—quiescent now, yet potentially explosive. Only the tourist situation has taken a positive turn, with the opening of a new airport at Larnaca and of new resorts in the south.

In the Pacific, the most controversial island is Taiwan, whose presence as a Chinese Nationalist bastion blocks the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. The Peking regime in-

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sists that the United States abrogate its defense pact with Taiwan and recognize the sovereignty of the People's Republic over the island. The Carter administration is prepared to take this step—but only on the condition that the Communists pledge that they will not use force to "liberate" the territory. Peking rejects this condition, asserting that the Taiwan issue is an internal Chinese question, and so explorations for a fresh formula to resolve the problem go on and on and on, at least providing employment for a corps of China experts. Meanwhile, Taiwan has become a model of capitalist prosperity, booming with factories, hotels, nightclubs, and some of the finest Chinese restaurants on earth, and nothing in its atmosphere remotely suggests that it is surviving on borrowed time—if indeed it is.

Although it is still on the drawing board, one of the most ambitious plans of the Carter administration is to work out independence for Micronesia, the vast collection of 2,141 islands stretching across the Pacific that has been a U.S. trusteeship since the end of World War II. The trusteeship has been a diplomatic embarrassment to the United States, which has been urging other colonial nations to relinquish their possessions. The principal hurdle to a new deal with Micronesia, however, is the Pentagon, which fears that the United States may lose a strategic foothold in the Pacific. It also wants to retain certain positions, such as the missile testing area near Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands.

Word that the United States was planning to build a naval base on remote Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean fomented a domestic squabble in the nation. India, then a client of the Russians, was hostile to the idea of an American base within its general sphere of influence. Now, with the Russians expelled from Somalia, it may prove questionable whether the United States has need of an installation in the Indian Ocean.

The catalog of other islands under internal or external pressures is endless, and the outcome of these pressures could have widespread repercussions. So in contrast to the time when a remote strip of land in some faraway sea had little effect on the rest of the world, it might now be appropriate to amend John Donne and conclude that no island is an island unto itself. ◉

*A former correspondent in the Far East and a member of the Council on Foreign Affairs, Stanley Karnow writes frequently for* Saturday Review.



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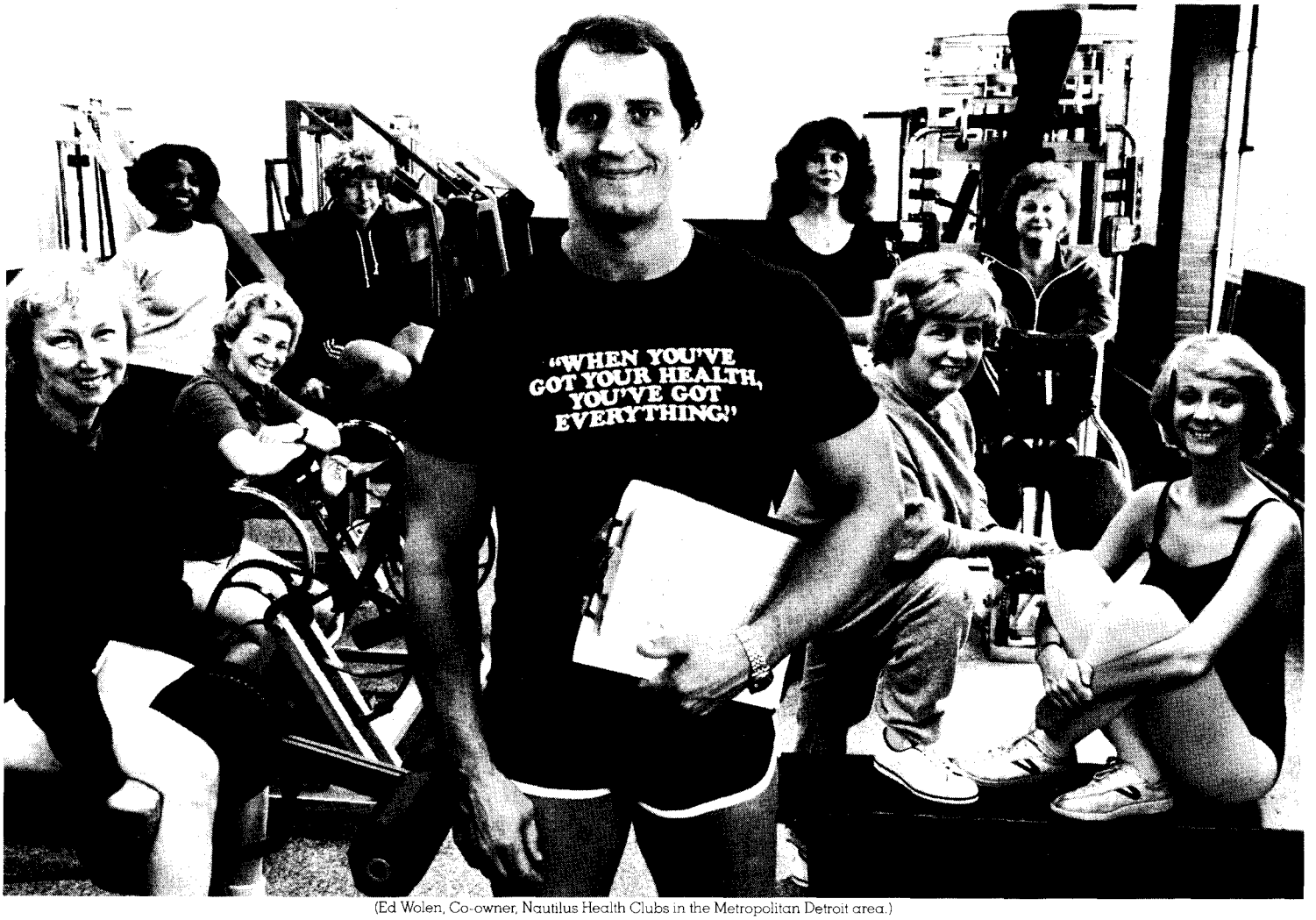
# Media wisdom from the mouth of Mr. Nautilus to the ears of William Esty.

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# Why Writers Need Islands

by C. Northcote Parkinson

WHEN BISMARCK was the German chancellor, the Blücher family, whose ancestor did so well at the Battle of Waterloo, left Germany in disgust and went to live on the Island of Herm, near Guernsey, there to breed kangaroos, or more precisely, wallabies (perhaps with a view to becoming self-sufficient in kangaroo tail soup). It was not a reaction that anyone could have foreseen; nor did Bismarck have exactly the same effect on anyone else. Nor was the experiment a success, for the wallabies failed to breed, and Herm eventually came under the rule of Compton Mackenzie, an author who loved islands and could be said, indeed, to have collected them.

An earlier author who lived thereabouts was Victor Hugo, but his affection for Guernsey was only relative, the result of his being exiled from France and expelled from Jersey. Later authors coming to Guernsey have made a more deliberate choice, one being Christopher Nicole, a second being Desmond Bagley, novelists of note; and a third being the author of the present essay.

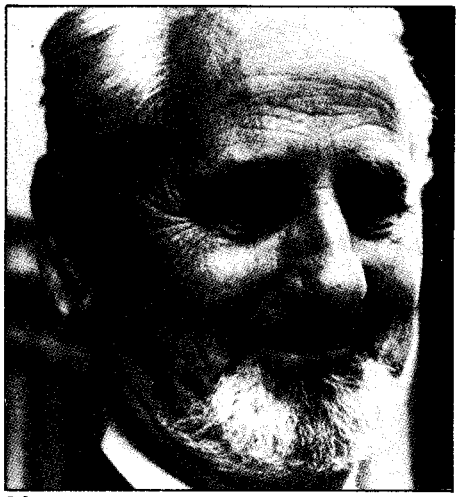
Many other writers have chosen an island life: Somerset Maugham, once known (and disliked) in Singapore; Hall Caine, once known (and revered) on the Isle of Man. An inveterate islander is Nicolas Monsarrat, author of *The Cruel Sea*, once a resident in Guernsey but now established in the island of Gozo, next to Malta, where he has no telephone but where the more frantic messages can reach him via the police station. The late T. H. White, of *Camelot*, lived his peculiar life in Alderney; and Sappho, perhaps as odd a character, was as well known in Lesbos.

For an author, any island must offer at first sight the promise of a quiet life. He wants, essentially, to live in an imaginary world of his own design and emerge only briefly at mealtimes. In a capital city he may gain publicity but must waste half his energy on conferences, committees, and cocktails. Once safely ashore on an island, he believes, he should be able to work without interruption. In theory, his output should at least double. Whether it does or not may be doubtful, but his thoughts are certainly undistracted by the masses and the media. The risk is, indeed, that he may lack mental stimulus and begin the self-repetition of a cracked Gramophone record. He would probably be wise to go elsewhere for at least three months in every year. But islands come in different sizes, and each presents a different problem. Life in the Azores is thus sharply contrasted with life in the Isle of Wight, and life in Vancouver Island is not to be confused with life in Tahiti. What population should an island have in order to offer tranquillity with at least reasonable amenity, quiet without undue isolation? This might well be the subject of a Ph.D. thesis, illustrated by graphs and tabulated figures of population and distance. But the scientific thesis is usually intended to prove what everybody knows already, which in this instance may be summarized as follows:

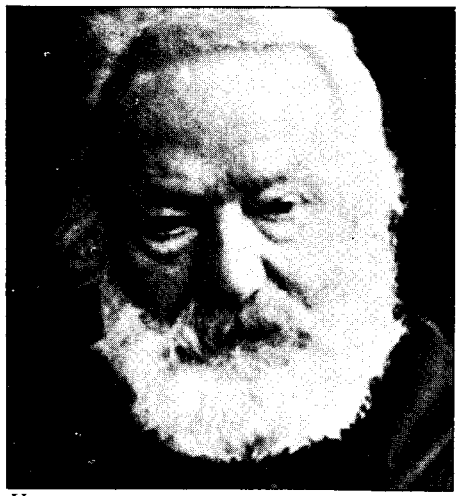
| Size of Population | Characteristics | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|
| 500–1,000 (e.g., Sark) | Lack of amenities, including a hospital or anyone to mend a typewriter. | No |
| 5,000–25,000 (e.g., Nantucket) | Amenities still insufficient. People spend their time quarreling with one another for lack of anything else to do. | No |
| 10,000–20,000 (e.g., Shetland Islands) | Amenities sufficient, but social life too restricted. | No |
| 40,000–100,000 (e.g., Bermuda) | Amenities and social life adequate but not excessive. | Yes |
| 500,000 and upward (e.g., Borneo) | Too big. | No |

Our choice is not to be guided solely by statistics of population. Other factors to consider include that of political status.

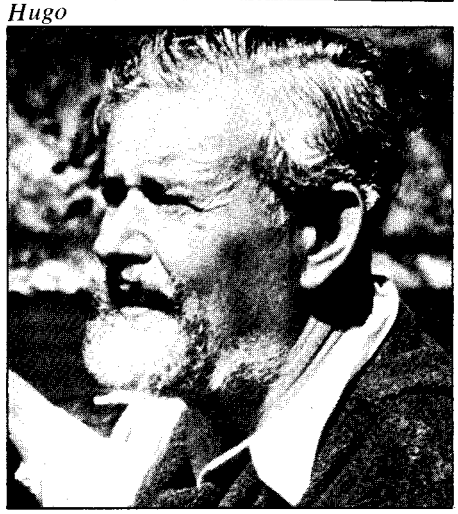
*Continued*



*Monsarrat*



*Hugo*



*White*



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The Channel Islands, for example, are all that remain to the queen of England of the duchy of Normandy, the rest of it having been carelessly mislaid in about 1204. To Queen Elizabeth the Second (their duke), the Channel Islanders are devotedly loyal, but they owe no allegiance to Mr. Callaghan the First. And there are some fiscal as well as climatic attractions, fittingly illustrated in the saga of the late E. Phillips Oppenheim, a very popular author in his day. When the Germans approached Guernsey, where he had lived for years, he wisely fled to Britain. He was already an old man, however, and his fear was that he would die in England and that his estate would thus become liable to British estate duty. When the Germans surrendered and before any regular communication had been reestablished between Britain and the Channel Islands, Oppenheim is said to have hired a fishing boat and so managed to reach Guernsey just before he died. Did he actually stagger through the surf and up onto the beach, falling prone and gasping just above high-water mark, his domicile reestablished? Or is it all a baseless legend? Anyway, the story is one of heroism in a noble cause, and we do well to pass it on to future generations.

Among the islands of the world, the Isle of Man is notable for occupying a position from which England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are visible from the same point and even (very occasionally) on the same day. There is a bridge, moreover, in the Isle of Man on which everyone says, "Good morning, little fairy," as a matter of common courtesy when crossing the boundary from one fairy kingdom into another. It might be "Good evening," by the way, but the principle would be the same. Awful results follow if you forget. Jersey is remarkable for having given birth to Lily Langtry, one of the most wonderful women of all time. But Guernsey is better still from an author's point of view and has the further merit of being almost ideal for bringing up a family. Other islands, like Penang or Madeira, have merits of their own, and Robert Louis Stevenson found his final haven in Samoa; but where but in feudal Guernsey could an author owe the queen two theoretical chickens a year and find consolation in the fact that her receiver general must then invite him to dinner? ◉

*C. Northcote Parkinson, the British historian, lives on Guernsey, in the Channel Islands. His new book,* Touch and Go, *has just been published by Houghton Mifflin.*


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# Electronic Pollution

**The Zapping of America: Microwaves, Their Deadly Risk, and the Cover-Up**
*by Paul Brodeur*
*Norton, 343 pp., $11.95*

Reviewed by Robert Claiborne

OUR SPECIES, like every other kind of life on earth, evolved amid natural environmental hazards—noxious microorganisms and parasites; toxic chemicals in plants, soils, and desert water holes; atmospheric contaminants from volcanoes and forest fires; radioactivity from rocks; and solar radiation outside the visible spectrum. The fact that we are here, several billion years after life first appeared in the primeval seas, is conclusive evidence that our ancestors developed physiological ways of neutralizing these dangers—not absolutely, indeed, but effectively enough to survive and multiply.

During the past century and a half, however, our own activities have created (and are increasingly creating) environmental hazards of kinds and in quantities quite unprecedented in evolutionary history. We inject into the atmosphere and oceans, or scatter over the earth, thousands and millions of tons of substances that previously existed only in trace quantities, if at all. We concentrate radioactive minerals into fuel for nuclear reactors whose operations then generate unnatural and violently radioactive isotopes. And from our intricate communications systems and radar installations, we broadcast radio waves that resemble some of the sun's natural emissions but are at least a million times as intense.

All these influences must be presumed harmful since they impose on our bodies stresses that we were not designed by evolution to withstand. In fact, the more such influences we study intensively, the more they turn out to be not presumptively but actually harmful. This is true of even so seemingly benign a substance as refined sugar—as any dentist will tell you. It is conspicuously true of hundreds of chemical pollutants and of the nuclear wastes whose safe disposal still troubles the sleep of scientists and engineers. And, as Paul Brodeur makes clear, it is true of at least some radio waves—notably, the high-frequency emissions known as microwaves.

In the United States alone, radio waves are emitted not merely by the 10,000 or so commercial radio and television stations but also by some 250,000 relay towers for telephone, teletype, and TV hookups; 15 million Citizen's Band radios; millions of microwave ovens; communications satellites and the immensely powerful transmitters that link us to them; radar at airports and in planes; diathermy machines; burglar alarms; and automatic garage door openers. And this listing does not include the unknown but very large number of military sources, ranging from low-power, short-range radar for tank gunners to the superviolent electromagnetic pulses used to simulate nuclear explosions. The result is a pervasive "electronic smog" whose biologic effects we are just beginning to understand.

Evaluating these effects is intrinsically difficult because of the many variables involved. These include frequency, ranging from millions to billions of hertz (cycles per second); power, ranging from a few watts to hundreds of kilowatts; and the contrast between *average* exposure, over an extended period, and *peak* exposure, which may be far higher. Other problematic questions are whether low-level exposures are cumulative or not–whether radiation that is harmless over a week is equally harmless over a year–and whether there exists a biologic threshold – a level below which even prolonged exposure produces no damage.

Investigation of these problems has been hindered by roadblocks thrown up by various interested parties—notably, the armed forces and the home appliance industry—that have done their best to conceal, distort, or obfuscate the facts. The parties even include some scientists whose subsidized researches seem at times designed to safeguard not the public but the manufacturers and military users of microwave equipment.

Nonetheless, certain facts have become clear. First, intense microwave radiation can literally cook the body's tissues, as a microwave oven cooks the roast within it. Second, considerably lower emissions—too low to be perceived even as heat—can cause cataracts. Finally, there is persuasive, though not yet conclusive, evidence that still lower emissions can, over time, engender ills ranging from upset stomach and loss of concentration to cancer. How serious a threat microwaves pose to public health is not certain, but the Soviet government considers it serious enough to set exposure standards at a level one one-thousandth of those considered acceptable here. (How rigorously the Soviet standards are enforced—especially in the armed forces—is of course not known.)

Confronted with facts of this sort, the U.S. government has followed the standard scenario for dealing with inconvenient revelations: (1) If you can, ignore them; (2) If you can't ignore them, deny them; (3) If you can't deny them, stamp them SECRET. The cover-up has been chiefly the work of the Department of Defense (DOD), with assists from State and Labor, whose aim has been to maintain its own maximum freedom to utilize radar and other, even more dangerous, microwave devices—and also to block lawsuits from injured service and civilian technicians. Cover-up techniques have included the usual ones of concealment, selective leaks, and "gapmanship"—the claim that we must catch up with alleged Soviet advances in microwave technology, or court destruction.

Brodeur evaluates his evidence on both the harmful effects of microwave radiation and the government cover-up in an exemplary manner; unlike some other writers on environmental hazards, he hardly ever tries to make rhetorical points by going beyond the facts. Where the evidence is conclusive, he says so; where it isn't, he doesn't pretend otherwise. (As regards the cover-up, no pretense is necessary; the evidence is conclusive beyond a reasonable doubt.)

Unfortunately, the author's presentation of the evidence falls well below his evaluation of it. The book's earlier chapters are lightened with lively anecdotal material,

*Robert Claiborne's books include* Climate, Man and History *and* God or Beast: Evolution and Human Nature.



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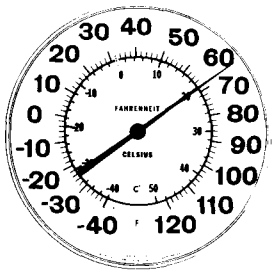

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but later ones are crammed with great lumps of undigested and indigestible scientific and bureaucratic jargon. Organization is uniformly poor; Brodeur shuttles back and forth in time in a manner guaranteed to confuse all but the most dedicated reader. His cast of characters is De Millean, and he has an irritating habit of dropping a name on page 237 that was last seen on page 122 and whose identification occurs only on page 85. At times, the reader finds himself drowning in acronymic alphabet soup and other trivia (does anyone really care whether a particular statement appears on page 2 or page 3 of a government document?).

One finishes the book with the regretful conviction that the author has lost control of his material. He tells us so much more than we want or need to know about the cover-up that we are left as numb as we are convinced. At one point,indeed, he himself wonders "if the reader has ... tired of observing Catch-22 as played by the Navy"; this reader's answer was a heartfelt "Yes!" At the same time, he tells us rather less than we need to know about microwaves themselves. After the Pentagon Papers and Watergate, it is hardly hot news that government officials lie; the important news here is the biologic dangers they are lying about.

*THE ZAPPING OF AMERICA* is an invaluable source book for any group concerned with our environment. One might wish that its author and its publisher might be induced to bring out an abridged—and rewritten—paperback edition, thereby enabling it to reach the wide public that the subject unquestionably deserves.

Its faults apart, the book raises by implication one of the most serious problems in the fight for a healthy environment: its conflict with a basic principle of Anglo-American law. The conflict is pointed up, in a backhanded way, by a quotation from Sol M. Michaelson, a veterinarian and researcher who has enjoyed a long and remunerative association with both the Defense Department and the home appliance industry. "We cannot," he told a Senate committee in 1973, "continue to succumb to self-interested groups and individuals who fail to substantiate their claims." In his view, the self-interested groups were not the DOD or the manufacturers of microwave ovens,but the environmentalists; and the unsubstantiated claims were not his own dubious allegations that microwaves were safe,but those of more disinterested scientists who held that they were dangerous.

Yet Michaelson was appealing, however disingenuously, to the long tradition that guilt, not innocence, must be proved. That is, unless the manufacturers and users of microwave sources could be shown to be doing harm, they must be allowed to go about their business.

The presumption of innocence cannot be lightly disregarded, at least in relation to crimes against individuals. When it comes to crimes against the environment, however, I believe we must be prepared to set this presumption aside. For the reasons given at the beginning of this article, environmental pollution, whether chemical, radiational, or electronic, must be presumed guilty until proven innocent. Otherwise, we may too easily end up proving a crime only at the cost of millions of victims. ◉

# Ecstasy and Death

**Dispatches**
*by Michael Herr*
*Knopf, 288 pp., $8.95*

Reviewed by William Plummer

WE HAVE HAD highly personal versions of Vietnam from Michael Casey, David Rabe, Ron Kovic, C.D.B. Bryan, Gloria Emerson, and Philip Caputo. And we should be thankful for them. Yet it is apparent now that they were but the long shadow running before Michael Herr. *Dispatches* is, hands down, *the* book about Americans in Vietnam.

It is ostensibly a conjunction of war stories, profiles, mini-dramas, and set pieces that appeared as reports from "over there" in *Esquire* and elsewhere. In its bound incarnation, *Dispatches* seems rather a force of memory that has taken these several years—Herr left Indochina in 1968—to be understood, and that still, blessedly, remains radiantly enigmatic. As Herr says, "I went to cover the war and the war covered me."

His way of talking about the burden of the war correspondent is suggestive; it explains why there is no linear narrative to *Dispatches*, why fragments, illuminations, are the only forms he trusts. Herr says he realized early on that as a journalist "you were as responsible for everything you saw

*William Plummer is the book review editor of* Quest/78.



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as for everything you did." He says, too, that "conventional journalism could no more reveal this war than conventional firepower could win it."

Responsibility and revelation: This is religious talk. Herr might be a latter-day Jonathan Edwards, scrutinizing the equivocal New England landscape for signs, for a design, intent on making random facts cohere into a personal, epiphanic narrative by suffusing his "eye" with his "I," by accepting the responsibility for revelation. Indeed, the parallel seems to have occurred to him, for he observes at one point that "the Puritan belief that Satan dwelt in Nature could have been born here."

No rock is left unturned, no figure untraced. Images arrange themselves around themes. There are images of fear: Herr, having just grasped the inescapable similarities between Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu, flies into Khe Sanh in the closing months of 1967 to be with the marines of I Corps and hears rumors that the legendary General Giap, the architect of the 1954 massacre, is holed up in the hills like Marlon Brando's Zapata and is plotting Dien Bien Phu II. Or, picture a jeep pulling up to a dump and a horror-struck marine jumping out, holding a bunched-up fatigue jacket at arm's length—a guy in his company has been blown away beside and all over him. Picture the young gyrene who has been camped for a month at the airstrip—he is incapable of boarding one of the daily transports and going home because his motor nerves balk at propelling him through the rain of "incoming" in order to enplane.

Both sides, both gooks and grunts, seek to improve their odds through "flip religion," magic, prayer. Not only are there no atheists in foxholes, "guys dress up in Batman fetishes; I saw a whole squad like that, it gave them a kind of dumb esprit." Guys carry five-pound Bibles from home; locks of hair; mezuzahs; girl friends' underwear; and snaps of wives, Huey Newton, and the pope. "One man was carrying an oatmeal cookie through his tour, wrapped up in foil and plastic and three pairs of socks." Meanwhile, "in Dalat the emperor's mother sprinkled rice in her hair so the birds could fly around her and feed while she said her morning prayers." Try the Francis of Assisi bit, try anything to get an edge on death.

THE INDELIBLE images in *Dispatches*, however, are of death, of failed magic. Conventional journalism, says Herr, "never found a way to report meaningfully about death, which of course was really what it was all about." There is the fascination with death: "You know how it is, you want to look and you don't want to look." There is, too, "the total impersonality of group death." Hemingway, the laconic ironist, wrote of the reams of paper that littered the dead after a battle. Herr, less tactful, less cool, writes of bodies "hanging over barbed wire or thrown promiscuously on the top of other dead, or up into the trees like terminal acrobats, *Look what I can do.*" Afterward, parties are sent out to shake the trees for dog tags.

There is also Poe's horror of being buried alive: "The marines were dying so incredibly fast, so far beyond the command's allowance, that one of them got zipped into a body bag and tossed to the top of a pile of KIAs [killed in action] while he was still alive. He regained consciousness up there, and writhed and heaved until his bag rolled to the ground...." There is the equally Gothic, curiously homoerotic image of "Americans and North Vietnamese stiff in one another's death embrace, their eyes wide open, their teeth bared or sunk deep into enemy flesh.... Lurps, seals, recondos, Green Beret bushmasters, redundant mutilators, heavy rapers, eye-shooters, widow-makers, name-takers, classic American types"—all are fragged, bagged, tagged. Now and again, a shell lands amidst the stack of body bags and a new meaning is given to "mop-up operation."

Against death and the heebie-jeebies, the American types, unsurprisingly, throw up a screen of black humor. Question: "How can you shoot women and children?" Answer: "It's easy, you just don't lead 'em so much." Or, "A sucking chest wound is Nature's way of telling you that you've been in a fire fight." The special outfit that flies defoliation missions is called "The Ranch Hands," and their motto is, "Only we can prevent forests." One grunt erects a shrine to Lenny Bruce. Others intone the words of Sixties songs that are talismanic for Nam: "Have you ever been experienced?"; "Trouble comin' every day"; "We got to get out of this place"; and, most ambiguous, "The magical mystery tour is coming to take you away." Peering out from every joke and song is "a dripping, laughing death-face."

But I am making *Dispatches* sound like an unrelieved horror story. There is a counterweight, for Herr is unembarrassedly reverential of the common soldier—especially of the marine, who emits the "sour reek of obsolescence," much as Uncas does in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The marines at Khe Sanh "got savaged a lot and softened a lot, their secret [knowledge of fear and


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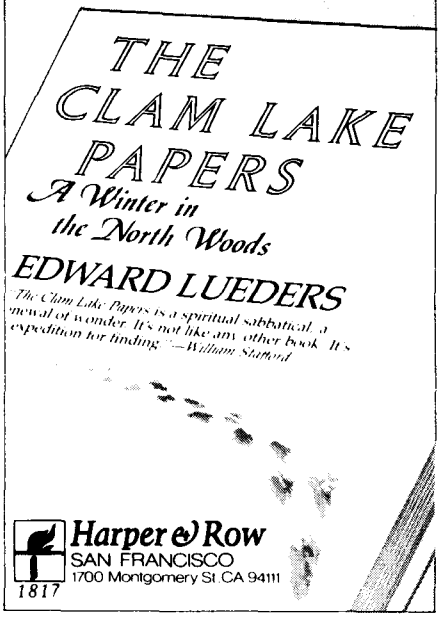


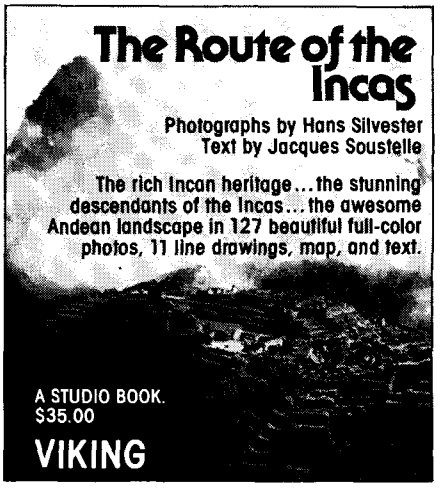
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death] brutalized them and darkened them and very often it made them beautiful." The marines live in the terror and beauty of the interstices of Kurt Vonnegut's pathetic phrase, "So it goes."

Not so the senior officers and military tacticians, who speak the Pentagonese of "frontier sealing" and "the strategy of the periphery," who trade in the euphemisms of "friendly casualties" and "meeting engagements" (read *ambush*). Herr remains uncharmed by the verbal ingenuity of those who refer to dead Vietnamese as "believers," to a lost American platoon as "a black eye." He is repelled by those who talk "as though killing a man was nothing more than depriving him of his vigor."

*Dispatches* is a deeply personal narrative; it is about "ecstasy and death," life lived in extremis; it is the feedback of "information printed on the eye" in the late Sixties, information "stored in the brain, coded over skin and transmitted by blood." It is, doubtless, Herr's way of keeping "real" the hard-earned camaraderie with the marines and with such fellow correspondents as Dana Stone and Sean Flynn—his way of keeping real his special experience. ◉

# Our Vulnerable Generals

**The War Managers**
*by Douglas Kinnard*
*The University Press of New England, 216 pp., $14*

Reviewed by Walter Goodman

THREE YEARS AGO, retired Army brigadier general Douglas Kinnard, who had served in Vietnam, decided to find out how the 173 other generals who had been in the Indo-Chinese war felt about various aspects of that troubling experience. He presented them with an extensive questionnaire and followed it up with interviews. The results may be found in his illuminating book, *The War Managers*. Besides offering the reflections of the brass on a war past, the book exposes attitudes that promise to endure through wars to come. The feelings held by the generals about press and television, about their own chains of command, and about civilian authority deserve attention outside the Pentagon walls.

In the opinion of most of the generals, newspaper stories about Vietnam ranged from "uneven" to "irresponsible," and television coverage ranged from "out of context" and "sensational" to "counterproductive." No doubt it did seem counterproductive to our top officers to have a battle that they had reckoned a victory revealed in news dispatches as something less, or to have news photographers catch one of our South Korean allies performing an execution, or to have television cameras film marines setting fire to an enemy village.

Never before had war been covered in such a way—but then, when had there been such a war? Without attempting to balance the charges of distortion against the claimed scoops of newspaper and television correspondents, one must concede that military heroes are less fortunate today than they were in the days of Homer. As W. H. Auden observed, "Hector was excused the insult of having his valor covered by television." There is no easy reconciliation in sight. Generals will simply have to learn to live with the intrusions of the press and television—at least as long as

*Walter Goodman is a member of the editorial board of* The New York Times.

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one of the ideals for which they fight is the preservation of freedom.

If there was any doubt at the time about the value of having nonmilitary observers in Vietnam, it was laid to rest by the notorious "body counts." Since the advancement of officers up the military ladder depended on their success in limited assignments and since our Presidents and the Pentagon were much in need of good news to bolster morale and to counter protests on the home front, the officers in the field were expected to produce evidence of success—notably body counts of enemy killed. Looking back now, six of ten generals believe that the body counts were "often inflated." In hindsight, the officers are indignant, calling the counts "fake—totally worthless," "often blatant lies," "gruesome—a ticket-punching item," "a blot on the honor of the Army."

Thus, the commendations and promotions designed to inspire officers to wisdom and courage became invitations not only to lies but also to needless risks and cruelty. Some soldiers were surely wounded or killed while tallying the enemy dead, and the definition of "enemy" was probably broadened for accounting purposes. This is an argument for civilian supervision of an ambitious officer cadre, but at that time, civilian policy makers were exerting pressures of their own. In any case, two thirds of the generals feel that the policy makers failed them in Vietnam because they did not make clear the objectives for which the military was supposed to be fighting. As one general commented, "The United States was committed to a military solution, without a firm military objective—the policy was attrition, killing Viet Cong; this offered no solution, it was senseless."

The military lost considerable luster as a result of the Vietnam War, but even its more ferocious critics may come away from *The War Managers* with the image of a general as a vulnerable figure under conflicting pressures from the civilian bureaucracy, concerned about political considerations at home and delicate relations abroad; from the press, whose business it is to be mistrustful and nosy; and from the Pentagon, which demands results that sometimes can be claimed only at the cost of honesty and decency. A difficult position for a commander in the field—but, given the alternative, a necessary and even healthy one for the rest of us. ◉

# Of Prophecy and Puppetry

**The Ice Age**
*by Margaret Drabble*
*Knopf, 320 pp., $8.95*

Reviewed by Paul Bailey

MARGARET DRABBLE'S ambitious new novel is concerned with the sorry state of English life in the 1970s. The England she describes in *The Ice Age* is a country bankrupt both economically and spiritually—a sad and stagnant place where the best lack all conviction and the worst have never known passionate intensity. Very few books have contained characters so shoddy and so listless. A note of doom is sounded on the very first page, and it increases in volume during the course of the melancholy narrative. This reviewer, an exiled Englishman, frequently found it almost deafening.

*The Ice Age* is nothing if not a prophetic work. Its author, loftily enthroned above the wretches whose arid, feckless lives she has set down for our edification, wails with a will, as prophets should. Margaret Drabble is the most intrusive narrator imaginable: She knows her people inside out—their dirty little secrets, their crippling inadequacies—and she cannot bear to keep all that knowledge to herself. Each player in the grim drama is introduced with a chunk of description and analysis, rather like that contained in a psychiatric dossier. The result of this method is that Len and Anthony and Alison, the principal figures in the novel, have no freedom, no mystery. Although their creator puts them through their paces ably enough, they really have nowhere to go. When Margaret Drabble wails over their misfortunes or chides them with some mildly amusing rhetoric, it is as if one were being invited to mock or mourn a puppet. The fiction that falls short of the highest standards never properly faces the challenge of human uniqueness, the twists and trials of the individual life. It explains rather than presents. The ice age men and women of Drabble's imagination have been explained out of existence.

Yet the ambition implicit in the design and the range of reference of *The Ice Age* must be saluted. The novel fails, but it does so honorably. The author has taken as her starting point some of the political misdeal-

*British novelist Paul Bailey teaches English at North Dakota State University.*


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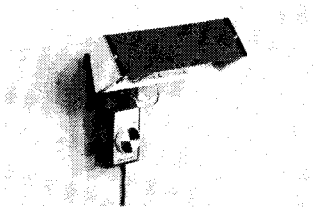

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**Wit Twister No. 109**
Edited by Arthur Swan

*The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word. Answers on page 53.*

— — — — — him in the ground
he loved to tend.
Hhis frame — — — — — with
that dark earth will blend,
His bones, like — — — — —,
nourishing the loam
From which the Holy — — — —
— has called him home.

A. S.

**Fraser Young**
**Literary Crypt No. 98**

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer on page 51.*

DB ZMI KYCLL DL KYIISIY DS ZMI UZMIY BIQQUV'L RCYG, QIZ MDH VUYYR CEUXZ AXZZDSK DZ.

—BYIG CQQIS

ings in recent English history—most pertinently, the case involving the architect John Poulson and the socialist councillor T. Dan Smith, who between them successfully tore the heart out of one of England's handsomest industrial cities, Newcastle upon Tyne. It was Smith's vision of a "Brasília of the North" that caused present-day Newcastle to look like any other arrangement of multistory car parks and Muzak-haunted shopping centers. In *The Ice Age*, Len Wincobank is a man with a similar vision, and Drabble accounts for it with some sympathy. To take the Poulson-Smith affair as a symbol of all that is rotten in England's green and pleasant land has involved Margaret Drabble in risk-taking, and her descriptions of English life and landscape must certainly be acknowledged as the finest prose she has written. But novels, alas, are made of the strong stuff of character and incident, and Drabble the prophetess—the author who unashamedly quotes from Milton's *Areopagitica*, that great call to mental arms that the English have never really heeded—does not allow either one free play in her hectoring sermon. Perhaps in her next book she will descend from the throne and paint a picture of her native land that will be occupied by flesh-and-blood creatures. *The Ice Age* is a work of fiction in which only the scenery is alive ◉

# Books in Brief

**Flesh and Blood**
*by Pete Hamill*
*Random House, 276 pp., $8.95*

A third of the way through this book, manager Gus Caputo instructs his fighter: "You study what the guy did in the past, to figure out what he's gonna do in the future. You *always* respect him." The same code applies to writing. Pete Hamill's previous novels (*A Killing for Christ*, *The Gift*) have been cogent, mannered vignettes about Brooklyn life. In *Flesh and Blood*, Hamill has unfortunately succumbed to the ignoble television-bred myth that the public will respond positively only to recycled pulp. However, despite its commercial obeisance, this book illuminates the author's ability to capture with stylized brio the nuances of the aching underbelly of society. That sensitivity in itself warrants a modicum of respect, with a cautious eye to the future.

It is an all-too-familiar tale that bounces a Brooklyn "bum" named Bobby Fallon from prison into the gray, cigar-smoke-filled world of professional boxing. In Fallon's case, it is not out of the frying pan and into the fire, but rather out of the growing pains of his difficult youth and into the mire of manhood and impending success to which he must adapt. The world seems to await his emergence eagerly, but the perverse lust for his mother and the legacy of a deserted father stand between Bobby and the title.

*Flesh and Blood* is an engrossing enough study of the lineal knot that becomes slowly untied. It travels the *Rocky* road, and while it "coulda been a contenduh," it emerges as only a pretender to the crown. —ROBERT STEPHEN SPITZ

**I Hardly Knew You**
*by Edna O'Brien*
*Doubleday, 204 pp., $7.95*

Edna O'Brien's new novel is an erotic mystery. The heroine, Nora, looks back on the events that led to the crime for which she has been imprisoned—the murder of her lover, who was her son's best friend. In a mosaic of vivid scenes, she recalls a night in Italy when, after fleeing a would-be rapist, she is taken in by peasants; her disastrous marriage to a bully; and her lovers of both sexes. Not until the last are we told about the murder itself, the why and the how.

Nora's sensuality is at once a break from her Catholic upbringing (women who take lovers are "whores") and a product of it ("On the day of my first Holy Communion the host seemed to fill the inside of my body with all the ecstasy I had ever craved"). She expresses her earthiness in pungent domestic associations (a female lover has "a quim as warm as jam that had just been lifted off a stove") and in her vigorous attention to her five senses. This makes for a great many enjoyable descriptions of ravenous eating and lovemaking. O'Brien's sex scenes are exuberant and tender; they reflect the sensibility of a passionate woman who gets pleasure from giving it.

Our enjoyment, however, is imperiled when we arrive at the solution of the mystery. After all the suspense, O'Brien's ending is nothing more than a cheap surprise effect, a melodramatic scene that diminishes all that has gone before it. For looking back on Nora's behavior in the light of the murder, we see her as something of a professional sensualist, one of those feckless creatures who sip and suck and smile their way through life, pretending to be ignorant of consequences. —RHODA KOENIG ◉


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# Fine Print

# Siftings

by Doris Grumbach

FINE BOOKS often escape notice. How can it be otherwise, with 40,000 books published in this country every year and so few national outlets for reviews? So before we are launched into another flood of books in the new year, I want to mention several of last year's volumes that are first-rate and well worth your attention, but that slipped through the critical sieves.

*Lorenzino*, by Arvin Upton (Norton, $7.95), was published in August, not the most propitious month for a first novel. It deserved critical admiration for the extraordinary writing, an unusual achievement in a historical novel. *Lorenzino* takes place in Florence and Rome during the sixteenth-century rule of the Medicis and brings to almost painful life the ruthless, subtle, intelligent, and violent family that dominated Italy and the Christian world during the Renaissance.

Not since Mary Renault's *The Last of the Wine* and other such books by that English master of historical fiction have I read such wise fictionalized history. Or perhaps it might better be called an incisive look at tyranny in the Machiavellian age through the eyes of political philosophers. Upton creates this whole bloody world in very few pages and peoples it with Pope Clemente VII, Alessandro de' Medici, his cousin Ippolito, and the narrator and prime mover, Lorenzino de' Medici. History provides us at once—on the first page—with the salient fact of the story: Lorenzino murdered the ruler of Florence, a tyrant and his cousin, Alessandro, in 1535. What we do not know—and what history does not tell us, but Upton, to a great extent, does—is why.

In the course of the narrative there are wonderfully civilized conversations. One I especially admired, the talk between Cardinal Ippolito (who assumes the role of God) and a few friends, is full of subtle theology and even more subtle pragmatic politics. But the story shifts from intellection to violent action: In a moment of pique during a banquet, Alessandro throws a young page into the open fireplace, where he is consumed by the flames. And then back again: Love for the city of Florence is the subject of a fine discourse by Lorenzino's aunt Catherine de' Medici.

The novel is full of witty aphorisms. "Cynicism is nothing more than the outcry of an innocence that refuses to die" and the pope's remark to Lorenzino, "You are so openly ironical that it cannot be irony," are two. The conversational interplay between philosophers and politicians, taking their impetus from their Greek and Roman predecessors, is wonderful to listen to. I urge *Lorenzino* upon you.

A novel by Kay Boyle, first published in 1938, was reissued during the summer, to the same fate as *Lorenzino*. To Boyle's way of thinking and to mine, *Monday Night* is her best novel (she has published 14 in her seventy-five years). It is a beautifully written psychological chase-thriller that portrays nighttime Paris in the late 1930s. Two young men, both Americans, set out to find a famous toxicologist who has achieved international recognition by discovering in the organs of dead persons poisons no one else could find, thus sending a number of men to the guillotine or to prison. Wilt is a drunken journalist who has lived abroad for many years; Bernie is a recently graduated doctor, still wet behind the ears, who has never been to Paris before. Wilt takes Bernie on a fantastic night tour through the city and its environs to find the scientist Bernie so much admires. The climax of their journey, on a Tuesday morning, is too good to reveal.

A devoted reader of Eric Ambler, Raymond Chandler, and John Le Carré will be surprised to see that Kay Boyle was on their turf before they were. Lovers of fine fictional prose who remember Boyle's pieces about Germany after World War II in the *New Yorker* will be pleased to have her good writing back in print. (The publisher is Paul Appel, 119 Library Lane, Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543.)

Tillie Olsen, the revered short story writer, wrote to me in the fall to urge me to read *Legal Kidnapping*, by Anna Demeter, which Beacon Press had just published. She said she was afraid the book would be lost in the shuffle, and so it was.

Beacon Press has distinguished itself by its series of short books on family problems, among them Carrie Carmichael's very good *Non-Sexist Childraising*. Demeter's book is unusual and moving, an account of a marriage between two physicians that fails. The wife asks for a divorce because her husband has been extraordinarily hard on their children, subjecting them to his spells of excessive rage and sulks. In a mad sort of retribution, the husband kidnaps two of the children, putting them through traumatic and wearying journeys with him while the mother and the two remaining children agonize over their departure. "A father has a legal right to kidnap his children" is the theorem of this compelling book. It not only explores the effects of the act but also offers useful advice, in an appendix, to others in the same situation as Anna Demeter (a pseudonym). The amazing thing is that this now happens very often in our society. A sensitive, scrupulously conceived and written work.

Finally, I have wanted to write for some time about *The States and the Nation Series*, a misbegotten idea that blossomed in the Bicentennial sun and was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. A historian in each state of the union was asked to write a history of that state, and Norton contracted to publish the whole wearisome collection of, on the whole, monumentally undistinguished accounts. They are uniformly bound in a discreet gray cloth with red spine labels, and their institutional look is a faithful representation of the uniformly dull, abstract, plodding texts of most of those in the series that I have examined.

Except for Louis D. Rubin Jr.'s rather sprightly history of Virginia. Rubin has brought his well-developed literary skills to bear upon the pedestrian task to which he was set and has produced a readable, personal, and often properly critical book. With its twin virtues of brevity and wit, it is a model of what the other *States* volumes might have been, given Rubin's taste, graceful writing, and ability to find the telling fact and the meaningful illustration. And speaking of another kind of illustration, the pictures inserted in the middle of each of the volumes are on the whole inadequate, glaringly commercial, and sentimental. But that is the only poor thing about *Virginia*: The history itself is a pleasure to read. ◉


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# Trade Winds

by William Cole

### Nature and Man's Nature

William Stafford, born in 1914, is a midwesterner who's become a northwesterner. His four previous books have just been wrapped up in one, with new poems added. *Stories That Could Be True: New and Collected Poems* (Harper & Row, $10.95) is indeed value for your money. The poems are greatly varied: some formal, some informal, many on nature, many on man's nature. There's an eerie quality about several of them—for example, this new one, "At the Playground":

Away down deep and away up high,
a swing drops you into the sky.
Back, it draws you away down deep,
forth, it flings you in a sweep
all the way to the stars and back
—Goodby, Jill; Goodby, Jack:
shuddering climb wild and steep,
away up high, away down deep.

### Any Page

Good reference books are timeless. Last October, Harper & Row brought out the *Morris Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, by William and Mary Morris, at $15. Open it to any page, and you'll find something to amuse, instruct, or surprise you. Here's "in the groove," "Inverness cape," "ipso facto," "Irish as Paddy's pig." Try another page: "Parkinson's law," "parquet flooring," "pasquinade," and "pathetic fallacy." Surely you want to know more about a couple of these. Elsewhere I learn that "Queer as Dick's hatband" refers to Oliver Cromwell's son, Richard, who succeeded his father and botched up everything—his "hatband" is a satirical reference to his crown. And we find that "hood" is a contraction of "hoodlum" (though we don't know where *that* comes from) and when properly pronounced rhymes with "brood." One needs to *know* all these things! Have you ever wondered why Lord Home is pronounced "Hume"?

According to legend, one of his ancestors was a leader of Scottish forces in the battle of Flodden Field, which saw the defeat of the army of James IV in 1513. At a particularly critical point in the battle, Home sought to rally his battered troops and instill new bravery in them. So he resorted to the magic of his name to inspire them. "Home, Home, Home" he cried, and—taking him at his word—the troops headed toward the road for home. The next day the third Lord Home, for so he was, decreed that henceforth his name should be pronounced "Hume."

And let me mention a reissue by that man of the word, Eric Partridge—*Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (Macmillan, $25). A browser's paradise.

### Rebbetzin

"If God had meant the Jews to live in suburbia, He would not have led them out of Egypt." That's a fairly typical wisecrack from *Rachel, The Rabbi's Wife*, by Silvia Tennenbaum (Morrow, $9.95), a book that many Jews will dislike. In quality and style it's somewhere between *My Life as a Kvetch* and *The Rabbi Slept Through Dinner*. The novel recounts a year in the life of a rebbetzin who lives in a commuters' town in Long Island's Nauseau County (I can make wisecracks, too). The rabbi, Seymour, is a randy intellectual, an independent man who scorns the venal politicking rampant among his congregants. His wife is a painter who, like her husband, wants to do things her way. Not an ideal couple for their position, and the plot revolves around the renewal of his contract. We have such bonbons as:

Debra and Murray Gerwitz had three sons: Spencer, Byron, and Blake. "What happened to Milton?" Seymour had asked Debra once, in a rare moment of drunken abandon.

As I said, many Jews will dislike the book, but that's the way the matzo crumbles.

### Big Talk

*The* party of the year that's just slipped over the hill was The Literary Guild's seventy-fifth anniversary celebration, held at the Waldorf-Astoria, complete with receiving line, dancing, and famous authors on all sides. Some notes: All those 600 people I've been seeing in everyday clothes for 30 years look almost unfamiliar in dinner jackets and long dresses. Strolling about, I tear a page from my notebook so Erica Jong and Rona Jaffe can exchange phone numbers. ... Speaking with Justin Kaplan, I mention of a passing literary sharpie, "He's an operator." Mishearing over the din, Joe says, "A lip-reader?" "Both!" I exclaim.... Talking with Kurt Vonnegut, we discover a mutual admiration for R. Crumb. Might have known.... There's Jill Krementz having *her* picture taken.... And Lillian Carter having the same, with Shirley MacLaine. ... Then, while I am standing with the editor in chief of a distinguished house, a Famous Author walks by. The editor gives him the briefest of nods. "Hey," I say, "I thought you were good friends." "We are, but we've already had our big talk this evening." ◉

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# Journalist of the Plague Years

Peter Beard

*"By the time the animals rolled onto their sides, they had turned the park into a desert as lifeless as the seas of the moon."*

by Owen Edwards

HOW CAN photography deal with Peter Beard? He is a self-proclaimed amateur who periodically careens like a fireworks pinwheel into the decorous scheme of things, strewing incandescent images and making earnest barn-side photographers and seekers-after-grants look plodding and ordinary. Even as his pictures force themselves into the most protected preserves of our minds, he insists that they are incidental, nothing more than the most convenient medium for his narrative purposes. Yet despite his blue-blooded offhandedness, Beard can no longer easily be ignored.

As both photographer and messenger, Beard is the bearer of extremely bad news. In his just published book, *The End of the Game* (Doubleday, $9.95), and in a glowering exhibition recently assembled at Manhattan's International Center of Photography (ICP), Beard has condensed 20 years of photographic work into a visual account of the death throes of East African wildlife. It is an agonizing tale, told through the fierce vision of a bombarded mind, that few may want to see or to know about.

One of the problems Beard has always posed for me is his personality; there is a temptation to dwell on him instead of on his work. He is one of those delectable writer's onions, revealing yet another eminently describable layer after each peeling, so enjoyable to ponder that after a while the critic starts to invent layers. Beard is a living relic, a reprise of those young Englishmen who in the nineteenth century went off to Africa to escape the coy hypocrisies of Victorian London and who on returning—tanned, scarred, and storied—were surrounded by those who hoped to recharge themselves on their vigor. The crucial difference between Beard and his spiritual progenitors is that in this last quarter of the twentieth century, the life of adventure he has so energetically sought and the wildlife he has so closely observed are indelibly marked for extinction.

Fueled by Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa*, Beard set off for Nairobi in 1955, while he was still a student at Yale. In a sense, he has never returned. Almost from the beginning, he kept a photographic record of what he saw, and although he cataloged the inevitable—racing zebras, statuesque Masai warriors, awesome elephants, shimmering giraffes—there was something, some element of grisly beauty, that made his pictures different. When an earlier version of *The End of the Game* was published in 1965, it was essentially a romantic book, interpreting the relentless agon of life and death in Kenya's plains and forests as background for the white man's game of shooting game. But the vultures of Beard's imagination were already feeding; death is at the heart of the book—a reeking, pervasive death that indicates a profound degree of preoccupation on Beard's part, clearly pointing to his future path.

*Continued*



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Peter Beard

*Airborne view of an elephant–"Beautiful and ghastly in varying degrees."*

Four years ago, Beard and Alistair Graham, an English zoologist, published *Eyelids of Morning: Mingled Destinies of Crocodiles and Men.* In gory dialectic the book gave an account of the killing of 500 or so crocodiles (for a scientific population study) at Kenya's Lake Rudolf. Surely one of the most unusual photography-and-text books ever printed, *Eyelids of Morning* established at least two things: that certain conservationists were ready to say goodbye to all that time-honored sentimentalizing about wild animals and to finally confront the mortal *lebensraum* combat between man and beast; and that Peter Beard could wield a camera with the special intuitive power of a great war correspondent.

The book was but a prelude to Beard's most extraordinary photographic achievement: a terrible document of a colossal "die-off" of starving elephants, crowded into Tsavo National Park by spreading farms and human population growth. By the late 1960s, conservationists in East Africa had split into two factions. The first advocated a scientific determination of how many elephants, rhinos, and other large animals the park could support and then a systematic killing (and distribution of the meat) to bring the herds down to their limits. The other argued for "nature's way"—letting Malthusian processes ultimately balance the herds and their food sources. The "man's way" advocates, many of whom were involved in a Ford Foundation study, lost the debate and were summarily ejected from Kenya's national parks. The idea of shooting elephants was not politically alluring. (Black African leaders still do a certain amount of worrying about their reputations in the West, however much ivory may pile up in their warehouses.) The Malthusians could then preside benignly over the expected mass starvation, using bulldozers to drag the gigantic carcasses away from the roads that tourists travel. What the nature's way enthusiasts had failed to anticipate fully, however, was that desperately hungry, doomed elephants would plunder and destroy their habitat. By the time thousands of starved animals finally stumbled and rolled onto their sides to shrivel in the sun (the hyenas and vultures were inadequate to the task of cleaning up), they had turned the park into a desert as lifeless as the seas of the moon.

Barred from entering the park, Beard hired a light plane and began taking pictures of the disaster. As the body count grew, and with it Beard's obsession, the plane went up day after day into the furious winds that swept across the ruined landscape. Finally, he had amassed thousands of photographs—one of the most extraordinary collections of images ever produced. Beautiful and ghastly in varying degrees, the elephants lie dead in ironically lifelike running positions, their bodies like random stains on the barren ground. The photographs are at once real and unearthly, in a way rare even for the eccentric capacities of photography.

The pictures of dead elephants form the final chapter of *The End of the Game* and almost a third of the exhibition at ICP. Enormously enlarged, they turn one wood-paneled room of the venerable Fifth Avenue ICP building into a mesmerizing necropolis. Whether as an eerie backdrop for a dinner party at which old money and young beauties (and Jackie Onassis) gathered to celebrate Beard's exhibition and ICP's third birthday,or as a close encounter of the primal kind for a single, stunned onlooker, what Beard calls his "ellys" are unforgettable. In life and in art, they are literally unrepeatable.

The rest of the exhibition, elegantly designed by painter Marvin Israel, is made up of Beard's earlier pictures, more typical "African photography" but always more singularly primitive, and, in a separate room, of pages from the diaries Beard has kept for the past 20 years. (Most of his diaries, as well as many negatives, were destroyed last summer when Beard's house in Montauk, Long Island, burned down—an event also photographically commemorated in the ICP show.) Like Beard, his uncommon commonplace books are hard to



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describe in anything less than a chapter loaded with Freudian asides and sniffed-out demon's trails. The pages on display—some charred almost black by the fire, others undamaged and enlarged several times their original size—are a phenomenal stew of newsclippings, objects, bits of Beard's own pictures, centerfold porn, torn movie tickets, lists of meals, exact times of visiting friends' arrivals in Montauk, Paris, Nairobi, London, and elsewhere, addresses and telephone numbers (these led to a small scandal when the New York *Post* mischievously published them), minute pen-and-ink drawings in a vaguely Bosch style, objects purchased and their prices noted, and, always, an array of appointments with such persona as Mick Jagger, R. D. Laing, Paddy Chayevsky, William Holden, ad infinitum. (Beard claims the actual writing is for texture, "like needlepoint.") The mood swings from methodical to hysterical, to wit this entry:

Tonite

Houston Oilers
vs.
Baltimore Colts

| | |
|---|---|
| Cincinnati | 21 |
| Cleveland | 0 |
| Pittsburgh | 23 |
| San Diego | 0 |
| Miami | 10 |
| Patriots | 3 |
| Cardinals | 23 |
| San Fran. | 20 |

Election Day: Tues:

sacked @ 5–6 am
up @ 10 to Ron Jackson &
Diary R. Tele.
Tommy Keller & Mike Cochrane
@ work
Mary Hartman & Gore Vidal
Insights into Diary's—in Time
Looking back on Africa
[here some illegible entries]
Can't be rushed
Laura arrives—12:49
Harry Minetree
calls re Rhodesia
Bill Harrison
*africana*
David Susskind
out to Rock to read
New Record COLD for
Nov. 2nd: 21F.
Bo Polk list
Arlene Dahl...

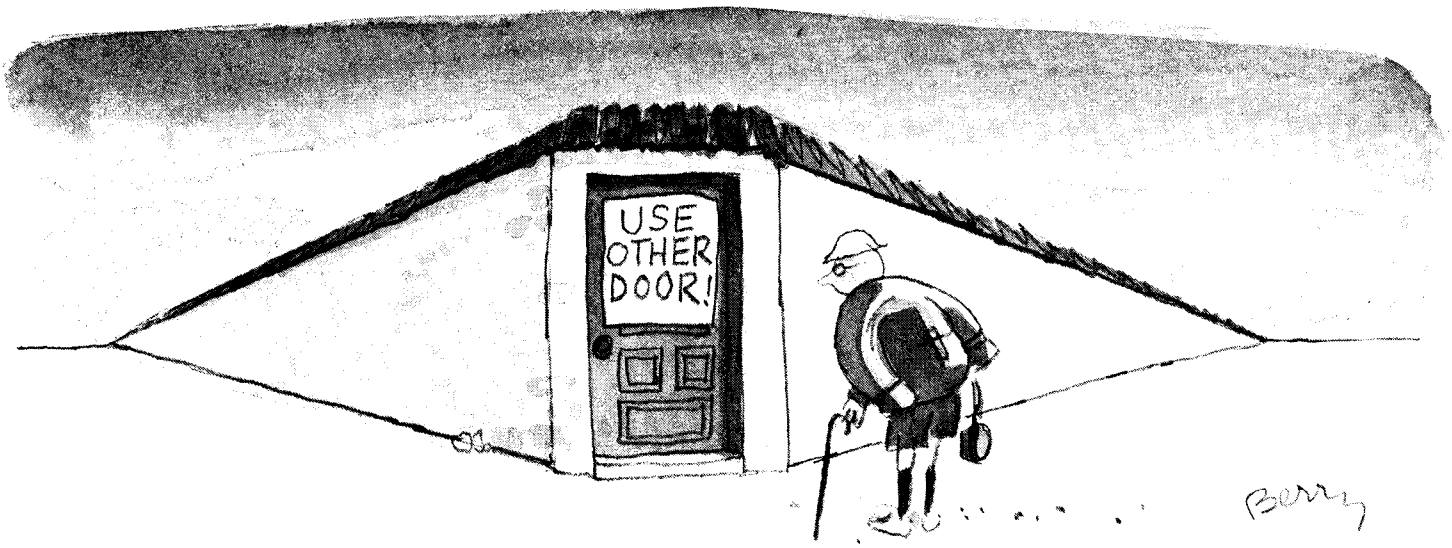
This scrap of needlepoint constitutes one tenth of the writing on the page, all of it in a mouselike hand, and is accompanied by a transfer rubbing of Gerald Ford in front of an American flag, a picture of a dead elephant, a used bandage, various election results, doodles of maybe 20 little faces, and a contact print of Beard's Montauk house. Since first seeing these diaries about a year ago, I have begun to suspect that they are not so much a genuine account of the life and times of P. Beard as a safety valve to bleed off steam from a perpetually overheated mind. The recorded ravings, mumbles, and psychic tics of a manifestly singular character, they are ultimately too personal to be of more than a parochial interest.

In the end, it's the photographs that count. Beard is not our Pepys, but he may be our Gibbons. What started as a schoolboy jaunt in the general direction of adventure has become a photographic odyssey across a vast landscape of death. Beard is no zealot—his WASP sense of irony is too acute—but he will interrupt his conversation with Andy Warhol or Lauren Hutton to take your arm in a slightly anxious grip and tell you how much elephants' social structures resemble those of humans, how they develop heart conditions from stress due to overcrowding, or how he sometimes gets the feeling that the destruction of Tsavo was a *willful act* by the elephants. Beard is not talking about conserving a few species of animals that he's had a nice time with; he's talking about survival in a world where human birthrates soar and space diminishes. What he is showing us in his pictures is far more than Kenya and elephants; he is showing us downtown Detroit, the South Bronx, the earth, and ourselves.

In *The Dragon Breath Papers*, Richard Gardner wrote, "There are two kinds of sculpture—one tries to ignore the fact of death, and that is entertainment. The other tries to assimilate death, and that is art."

By this measure, Peter Beard's massive gray monoliths, gutted and rotting on their self-made desert, are photographic art at its most transfiguring.

Even more terrifying, they are the shapes of things to come. ◉





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## The Movies

# Close Encounters of a Benign Kind

by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

WHEN ALL ELSE about the twentieth century is forgotten, it will doubtless still be remembered as the century when man burst his terrestrial bonds and began the adventure of space. Yet until recently the space film was a minor genre. Then Stanley Kubrick's *2001* showed that space could provide a theme for a masterpiece, and George Lucas's *Star Wars* showed that space could rescue 20th Century-Fox from drift toward bankruptcy. Now Steven Spielberg, the wunderkind of *Jaws*, has tried in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* for both a masterpiece and a blockbuster. I cannot estimate his chances of the second, but he has made an honorable stab, I believe, at achieving the first.

*Close Encounters* assumes the reality of an intelligent life somewhere else in the universe—not unreasonably, in view of the size of the cosmos and the improbability that life exists in only one of an infinitude of galaxies. It deals with the first meeting between earthlings and extraterrestrials. It uses this theme for terror, melodrama, and satire in fairly obvious ways. Its power comes from its sense of wonder.

Scott Fitzgerald once wrote of the "transitory enchanted moment" when "man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder." But it was not the last time in history. Fitzgerald did not allow for space. Spielberg catches that moment of wonder marvelously when ordinary Americans, gathered on an Indiana hillside, suddenly see the extraterrestrial spaceship soaring down out of the night. And he embodies the capacity for wonder throughout in a four-year-old child drawn buoyantly and irresistibly to the intruders. (The child is beautifully played by Cary Guffey, an immense relief after the odious juveniles presented to us earlier this season.)

The audience, or at least this member of it, often does not altogether understand what is going on. Mystification is part of the technique of wonder, and no doubt properly so. But too much is left unexplained here. I never figured out, for example, who the French scientist, played with gentle charm by François Truffaut, was supposed to be. The sequence in India, though visually superb, was incomprehensible. How could the giant spaceship touch down in the tiny arena built for it by the Army? When did the Army, first displayed scoffing at unidentified flying objects, begin to take the extraterrestrial possibility seriously?

Still, Spielberg's narrative drive is confident and sustained. He keeps the sprawling story under firm control. The special effects, concocted by that magician Douglas Trumbull, are dazzling. The effects, indeed, dwarf the actors, though Melinda Dillon conveys real anguish as the mother of the kidnapped boy. Richard Dreyfuss struggles manfully with a script that gives too much footage to his rather boring domestic troubles.

The film is full of nice imaginative touches. I particularly liked the way the alien spaceship managed to turn on electric toys, television sets, and stoves. The climax, of course, is the meeting with the extraterrestrials. Spielberg gambled when he decided to show us, in close-up, a being from outer space. Another director might have played it safe, representing the aliens by a play of lights and shadows and leaving it to the audience's imagination to fill in the detail. Still, the risk taken, the result is not implausible; rather, oddly haunting. The last scene, when the spaceship, with American volunteers aboard, takes off into the great dark, is genuinely moving.

A comparison with *Star Wars* is really not apt. *Star Wars* was a romp in outer space, a delicious film, filled with antic imagination and bravura action, but an entertainment, not a testament. *Close Encounters* falls about halfway between *Star Wars* and *2001*. It lacks the austere passion and the apocalyptic imagination that Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke brought to the latter. But it has a sense of historic significance and a distinctive poignancy of its own.

*Close Encounters* is also a surprisingly optimistic film. Kubrick showed robots succumbing to original sin and concluded with the spaceship roaring through space and time in a sequence of epiphanic mysticism. Lucas's movie was based, if on anything coherent, on a cyclical theory of history, with the Force, the power of the spirit, engaged in perennial struggle against dehumanized and corrupting technology. Spielberg embraces a progressive view of history. In this regard he is in the spirit of Jules Verne rather than of H. G. Wells.

"My favorite author," Dr. Edward Teller, the nuclear physicist, once said, "was Jules Verne. I no longer read science fiction. This is not because I have become particularly more wise or clever. Science fiction has changed. When I was young, science fiction said, 'How wonderful.' Today, science fiction says, 'How horrible.' ... We are afraid of the power which man now holds in his hands." The change was crystallized by Wells. However utopian Wells may have been in his manifestos, he was generally a pessimist in his tales. His was the imagination of catastrophe.

*Close Encounters* says, "How wonderful." Spielberg has no doubt that the visitors from space will be benign. The little boy, snatched up as the spaceship hovers over Indiana, returns intact and happy. But how can we be so sure that a civilization sufficiently in advance of our own to put its spaceship on earth will regard us with any more consideration than white intruders from Europe regarded the Indians of the American continent, the blacks of Africa, or the primitive peoples of the South Pacific?

Professor Zdenek Kopal of the University of Manchester has warned: "The chances that we could come across another civilization in the Universe at approximately the same level of development—and with which we could effect some kind of intellectual understanding—are ... vanishingly small." This being so, what gain could we expect from contact with civilizations millions of years ahead of our own? "The risks entailed in such an encounter would vastly exceed any possible interest—let alone benefit; and could easily prove fatal. Therefore, should we ever hear that 'space-phone' ringing...for God's sake let us not answer; but rather make ourselves as inconspicuous as we can to avoid attracting attention."

This is not Steven Spielberg's vision. Let us pray that the future dreamed of in this humane, attractive, brilliant movie turns out to be right. ◉



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# Television

# Communism's More Human Face

by Karl E. Meyer

ONLY RARELY do Americans get the chance to see the Soviet Union from within, through the eyes of those who are trying to reform and humanize a cruelly difficult system. In a remarkable drama, *The Ascent of Mt. Fuji*, we are in effect privileged eavesdroppers on a nation's "family" quarrel—the discord over the personal responsibility of every Soviet citizen for the crimes of Stalinism. The television premiere of this Russian play is to my mind an event of moral and aesthetic importance, and it is another coup for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). (*The Ascent of Mt. Fuji* will be broadcast on Tuesday, January 10, at 8:00 P.M. EST on most public stations.)

What is most significant about *Mt. Fuji* is that its authors are neither dissidents nor émigrés. Yet in their drama, Chingiz Aitmatov and Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov were able to deal so effectively with the sensitive theme of dissent that their play was a resounding success at a leading Moscow theater in 1973.

To be sure, *Mt. Fuji* employs code-language and prudent symbolism, but its message is clear enough, and it is in no way hackwork. The authors use the dramatic technique of Chekhov—free-form conversation among intimate friends in which terrible truths are suddenly blurted out.

The play has nothing to do with Japan or mountain-climbing. It is set in post-Stalinist Kazakhstan, in Soviet Asia, on a mountain that has been whimsically named Fuji. Gathered here for a weekend reunion are four old schoolmates, their wives, and the high school teacher who has regarded the boys, now middle-aged, as her own favored offspring.

Like Godot, Sabur, the main character and fifth schoolmate, never appears. He is a poet who, we learn, was betrayed during World War II by one of the four schoolmates; he had written some heretically pacifist verse in his notebooks, and for this crime he was recalled from the front and sent to a labor camp.

As the circumstances of Sabur's betrayal slowly emerge, the mountain, like its namesake, becomes a holy place where conscience speaks. Then, in an unexpected, very Chekhovian twist, two of the four comrades once again decline to accept moral responsibility for an accidental wrong—this time having nothing to do with politics—that ends their reunion. The drama does not close on a note of sentimental affirmation; instead, it underscores the conformist pressures within Soviet society. "How can a man be a human being?" runs a line in one of Sabur's poems, and in addressing this question, the play lights a flare on Mt. Fuji.

*The Ascent of Mt. Fuji* had its American debut in Washington at the Arena Stage. Produced and directed for the Hollywood Television Theatre by Norman Lloyd, the film's roles are competently acted and simply staged. Nicholas Bethell translated the play. The lovely Andrea Marcovicci, playing the actress Gulzhan, seemed outstanding to me, but all performed admirably in this welcome attempt to show communism's more human face.

IN OUR SOCIETY, we may not publish certain poets, but we do not send them to labor camps. In America, those we label "nonpersons" are the old, those unfortunates we describe, in that dreadful newspeak phrase, as "senior citizens." Television generally ignores the old, both as an audience and as a source of enlivening interviews (save in the case of *People* magazine celebrities like the late Leopold Stokowski).

For this reason, I am pleased to call attention to another PBS show, *The Crowded Life*. A portrait of Eric Hoffer, the program examines the thoughts and theories of this longshoreman philosopher who, nearing eighty, is as irascibly articulate as ever. (*The Crowded Life* will be broadcast on Tuesday, January 17, from 8:00 to 9:30 P.M. EST on most public stations.)

Wisely, producer Jeanne Wolf of WPBT in Miami has let Hoffer do all the talking, and if his ideas are familiar, his language is invariably fresh. Hoffer, who has a wonderful face—a tanned parchment, with a surface like a relief map—has tirelessly restated the same essential ideas that he put forth in his first book, *The True Believer*, when he was fifty. Some examples: "It is not love of self but hatred of self that is at the root of the troubles that afflict the world." And, "We find it easier to believe in God than in the purposeful workings of blind chance."

It is impossible not to be impressed by this self-educated, urban Thoreau as he draws on a lifetime of experience in San Francisco and on its waterfront. I am not as smitten with some of his ideas, which seem oversimple to me—Hoffer, in his celebration of the common man, tends to disregard the George Wallace, racist segment of the world; in his put-down of intellectuals, he also stubbornly disregards the role of the educated few in forcing the many to face racial and economic injustices.

Never mind. Hoffer is sui generis, and through his love of language and learning he has earned a niche in the community of useful troublemakers.

But why stop with Hoffer? There are dozens of other, now retired Americans who should be given television attention. To mention a single example: J. William Fulbright, former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. What does Fulbright think of Carter, the Middle East, energy, SALT? I'd very much like to know. But Fulbright is no longer in office; he is a nonperson in Washington, consigned to American history's dustbin. Is it too much to hope that television will do more to tap our most flagrantly neglected resource—the wisdom of those who can think in decades, not simply in days and weeks? ◉

**Answer to Middleton Double-Crostic No. 137**

Lillian Carter (and Gloria Carter Spann): Away from Home (Letters to My Family)

After all the talk I heard about snakes in India, I haven't seen a one. The only thing I've found to be afraid of is riding in a car. I simply close my eyes, while the driver just toots the horn and people run out of the way—all nearly being slaughtered.


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## Dance

# Remembering the Mighty Wurlitzer

by Walter Terry

NEW YORK'S Radio City Music Hall—the greatest art deco palace in America—has been besieged by one financial dilemma after another in recent years. If a solution isn't found soon, the hall's spectacular stage show—with its specialty acts, its symphony orchestra, its incredible Wurlitzer organ music, and, of course, its matchless Rockettes—will become just another memory of a great, grand past.

Shortly after Radio City opened in December 1932 with an all-live stage show that featured dancers Martha Graham and her company, Europe's Harald Kreutzberg, and the inimitable Ray Bolger, its program was expanded to include great movies—ones with no pornography, either visual or spoken, and very little violence. But today, there aren't any new Irene Dunne films to fill the bill; there are still families in America, but there are very few star-studded, first-class family movies. Therein lies the problem. In order to pay for the stage shows, the family movies booked into Radio City must fill all its 6,000 seats four times a day.

Movies, good or bad, can be shown anywhere; they are important to Radio City for its box office needs. What is unique about Radio City is not the filmed part of the program but the live part. One recent live show there was *Salute to N.Y.C.*, an excellent production and a typical example of the music hall's spectacles. The Rockettes, the world's greatest precision "line" dancers, performed a first-rate routine choreographed by Violet Holmes. In a number called "Hard Hats," they riveted as they tapped, building a city in rhythm. Peter Gennaro, one of the nation's finest jazz dancers and now a producer at Radio City, choreographed the delightful "Central Park, N.Y.C. 10023" ballet. He was also responsible for the "Street Scene" episode starring Kuniko Narai and Luis Villanueva, brilliant exponents of the oft neglected art of adagio dancing, with its scary lifts, perilous hurtlings, and split-second catches—all of which they accomplished with ease and suavity.

(The theater's world-famous Christmastime pageant, *The Nativity*, first produced 45 years ago and seen by millions, is now in its final week at the music hall. There is always a secular part to the stage show; this year it is Gennaro's *Glittering Garlands*.)

The settings and mechanical accomplishments are also big attractions of Radio City's shows. Although a movie like *Star Wars* may achieve effects that are impossible to re-create onstage, they aren't "live," and we are fully aware of that. But when New York City and its skyscrapers are built before our eyes, there is an excitement, a sense of immediacy, that no movie or TV show can equal. In Radio City productions throughout the years, I've seen a battleship onstage, a train depart from a railroad station and journey up a mountainside, and a fabulous "underwater" ballet take place beneath the sea. And who can ever forget Florence Rogge's choreography for Ravel's *Bolero*, the most fabulous staging of the perennial favorite?

Admittedly, there is an element of nostalgia in my desire to preserve Radio City Music Hall forever and ever. In the days before television, it brought classical ballet to the masses. Radio City's resident corps de ballet, disbanded a few years ago, was once the only permanently housed ballet company in New York City besides the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. But unlike the Met, Radio City Music Hall offered ballet four times a day, 52 weeks a year. Rogge, a superb ballet mistress and one of the most influential choreographers of her day, not only created many original ballets for Radio City but also made short yet large-scale (to fill the stage) versions of great ballet classics, such as *Les Sylphides*, *Coppélia*, and act two of *Swan Lake*. Thousands and thousands, even millions, of Americans were introduced to good ballet through Radio City productions.

Now that TV has brought classical ballet into every home, a permanent corps de ballet is probably no longer needed at Radio City, but ballet itself, performed by dancers engaged for individual shows produced by Gennaro or by John H. Jackson, senior producer and vice-president of the music hall, remains important to this "Showplace of the Nation in the Heart of Rockefeller Center," as its motto goes.

Essential, too, are the Rockettes, originally launched by Rogge's colleague, Russell Markert, a master of choreography for precision dancers, glee clubs, acrobats, magicians, aerialists, and all the elite of variety shows. Last summer, the Rockettes demonstrated once again that they are part of the hall's "living" historic tradition. In a rare appearance away from home, at the New York Dance Festival held in Central Park, they were an absolute smash, as important as any (and far better than most) other dancer or dance group that appeared there.

How to sustain Radio City Music Hall? The management, in order to assure at least temporary survival, has been turning the theater over to nightclub entertainers, rock musicians, and other popular entertainers who can draw big crowds. The most recent such lease was taken for a pop music festival.

It is to be hoped that this system of permitting pop artists to use the music hall during seasonal lulls will work. If it doesn't, something else must be devised. Radio City's original "sister" house, the great Center Theater that once stood across the street, hosted the debut of the American Ballet Theatre, the New York opera debut of Dorothy Kirsten, the great ice ballets choreographed by Catherine Littlefield; but it was torn down while it was still new to make way for something as cultural as a garage or a drugstore. We can't let that happen to Radio City. It may be a memory of bygone days, but it is a living memory.

Because it is a presumably profit-making enterprise, the hall is surely not eligible for support from the government or from foundations. Since it is the royal palace of Rockefeller Center, could one of the numerous Rockefeller businesses perhaps give it lasting support of some sort? I don't know; I simply ask.

Radio City Music Hall and its productions are part of America's theatrical heritage—a very special part indeed. At one show I attended, a gentleman seated next to me didn't clap when the Rockettes, at the conclusion of their routine, lined up across the great stage (once measured as being 36 Rockettes wide) and kicked in unison. I turned to him and snarled, "You are obviously a foreigner. In America, we stand for 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and we applaud the Rockettes' kicks!" Terrified, he leaped to his feet and gave an ovation. It was absolutely suitable—an appropriate homage to the "Showplace of the Nation." ◉



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# Light Refractions

# The Quarterly Report...

by Thomas H. Middleton

LAURENCE URDANG, the editor and publisher of *Verbatim: The Language Quarterly*, has brought out a new publication. It's called *Quarrel*, and he sent me a copy of the first issue. *Quarrel* might at first seem an unpromising name for a magazine, but the title is actually an acronymic derivation from its subtitle, *The Quarterly Report on the English Language*. *Quarrel* is designed to be a sort of compendium of neologisms.

Having thoroughly enjoyed my browse through its pages, I pulled out the subscription blank and got my checkbook. I had actually started to make out the check when I noticed that a subscription is tagged at $12,000 a year. That's *twelve thousand dollars a year*. It wasn't until then that I read the publisher's foreword, which says in part that *Quarrel* "is a research facility offered to publishers who require the latest accumulations of citation data for the continual updating and revision of dictionaries in which English is an important language—in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual works of lexicography." So that's it. It's not a quarterly for casual subscribers. It's for publishers of dictionaries. Unique, I should think, and very likely worth every cent of $12,000 a year. The foreword goes on, "None of the cited entries appears in any work of general lexicography. It is our intention to continue to collect citations for such tokens until they are either added to a dictionary or disappear from the language."

Knowing Larry Urdang, I'm sure he hopes as fervently as I that many of his citations will disappear from the language before they are added to dictionaries.

One of my prime candidates for quick death is *conferencing*. *Quarrel*'s word harvesters found *conferencing* in a periodical called *Adult Leadership*. "Adult and continuing education conferencing has grown over the past fifteen years into an enterprise which grosses two to four billion dollars annually," it says. And further on, "Clearly, conferencing is a booming business. Conferences come in all shapes, sizes, and emphases—including every imaginable mix of interests and expertise."

I find *conferencing* an abomination. Why the writer didn't say "Clearly, conferences are a booming business" is puzzling. *Conferencing* may be getting entrenched, though. Even *SR* [September 17] had a photo caption, "Literary conferencing," instead of "Literary conference."

*"I'm going to put you on a paper clip for a week or so, and if that doesn't help, we may have to operate."*

Little as I like *conferencing*, it appears quite benign when compared to some of the citations *Quarrel* has gleaned from *Guns & Ammo*. The least offensive of these is *motherless*, to mean, apparently, "stewed," "blotto," or "pie-eyed": "throwing orgies all over the kingdom, getting everybody motherless on wine, mead, and ale...." That's harmless enough, though I doubt that we really need yet another synonym for *fried*, *pickled*, and *stinko*.

For sheer literary ineptitude, it would be hard to beat *Guns & Ammo*'s use of *elevatoring*, a word that appears in what is evidently one of the magazine's works of fiction: "I heard him hum softly as he ate great quantities of meat, potatoes, and vegetables. Never did he break rhythm, as his Adam's apple literally flew up and down, elevatoring food to his stomach."

It seems to me that to miss the fact that *elevator* carries a stronger implication of "raising" than of "lowering" requires a stunning lack of sensitivity to words. Our trencherman appears to be caught halfway between swallowing and regurgitating.

Under the citation *social work* is another quotation from *Guns & Ammo*. The question asked is, "If you had your choice of any bullet, primer, and powder currently available, what combination would you choose as an optimum self-defense load for the .45 ACP in a Mark IV?" *Guns & Ammo*'s answer says, "I favor a 215-grain, semi-wadcutter, homogeneous bullet and 7½ grains of Unique in .45 ACP for social work. However, almost any load in this cartridge will do pretty well."

The gut-wrenching swagger of that one is followed by *sod poodles*. The same issue of *Guns & Ammo* has an article called "Prairie Dogs," with the accompanying teaser, "Shooting sod poodles with a rifle isn't that tough—but with a handgun, it's a whole new ball game."

I'm not leaping to the defense of the poor prairie dogs. They may be cute little rodents, but it doesn't pay to get maudlin over them. They are terribly destructive of farmland and of grazing land. Still, I can't help picturing the scene: "Okay, Sod Poodle. I'm gunna count ta three and if you ain't offa my land, I'm gunna draw."

It occurs to me that I've probably been unfair, writing about *Quarrel* and quoting only the most depressing of its contents. As the type of person who can spend a long time leafing happily through a dictionary, I find *Quarrel* fascinating. Considering that it isn't even a monthly, though, $12,000 is pretty steep. ◉


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Medicare fees in 1970, it found that they almost invariably were higher—sometimes much higher. General American Life had been paying Missouri doctors $100 for cataract operations on its regular policyholders; for Medicare patients its fees averaged $416. John Hancock had been paying Georgia doctors an average of $163 to remove a gallbladder; under Medicare it paid $421. Alabama Blue Shield raised its payment for a cataract operation from $75 to $345, while Illinois Blue Shield pushed up its price for a prostate operation from $165 to $625.

SSA's tender loving care for the doctors showed up immediately in their fees. Before 1965, these had been increasing by less than 3 percent a year; during the first five years of the new program, the rate of increase more than doubled, to 6.6 percent a year. Doctors' incomes rose even faster, thanks to the influx of government-subsidized patients, by some 9 percent a year. One would like to believe that doctors were working harder for the extra money, but the truth seems to be that though they were seeing more patients, they weren't working longer hours—meaning, of course, that they were spending less time with each patient. If you were wondering why your doctor doesn't make house calls....

After 10 years of Medicare-Medicaid, American doctors are the highest paid professionals in the world (with the possible exception of Swiss doctors). Their *average* net income (after expenses but before taxes) is now around $60,000 a year, with some well into the six-figure bracket. Moreover, they do distinctly better than other professionals of similar skill and experience, making some 10 percent more money than plant managers and economists, at least 20 percent more than lawyers, and nearly 25 percent more than engineers.

Most doctors have achieved their gilt-edged incomes within the law—and SSA's elastic regulations. Some have gone outside the law, especially in dealing with Medicaid patients. Medical groups in poverty areas have evolved the technique of "Ping-Ponging," in which a patient with, say, a stomachache is bounced from an internist to a dermatologist to a podiatrist to an optometrist, with Medicaid paying for all four. Another scam is "family ganging," in which a patient is told to bring in his or her entire family for examination and treatment—necessary or not. More conventional types of fraud include kickbacks from clinical laboratories and billing for nonexistent services; one practitioner billed for six tonsillectomies on the same patient.

Fraud has been even more spectacular in the nursing home business (largely created by Medicare-Medicaid), as has been attested by dozens of newspaper stories over the past five years. Indeed, it is fair to say that large-scale fraud (as opposed to large-scale waste) in health care began with these programs. As Franklin long ago observed, there is no vice into which otherwise virtuous men more easily fall than that of defrauding the government.

For all that, it would be wrong to see Medicare-Medicaid as merely a bonanza for doctors and hospitals, for sharpshooters like Perot, and for outright crooks like nursing home tycoon Bernard Bergman and the Medicaid-mill physicians. A bonanza it has certainly been, but for the poor and the elderly it has still been a real boon, giving them for the first time access to health care that they have badly needed. Doubtless some of the care they get is of low quality, and much of it, like much of the care we all get, is unnecessarily elaborate and expensive—but it is still better than none at all.

A no less serious mistake would be to see the current inflationary crisis in health care as caused by Medicare-Medicaid. As we have seen, the incentives for waste and inflation were built into our health care system long before 1965; Medicare-Medicaid merely made a bad situation worse. The moral of these measures is not that some people will rip off the government if they get the chance—this was hardly news in 1965 or even in 1865—but rather that if you pump more water into a leaky plumbing system, the leaks get worse. By the same token, if we pump in still more water, say, through an expanded system of national health insurance without first plugging the leaks, we could produce an inflationary flood.

So long as the people who run our health care system are rewarded—in money, prestige, and power—for being wasteful, waste is what we'll get; if we want to end the waste, we must change the system of rewards. How this might be done is material for another article; that it *can* be done has been demonstrated both by Canada's national health insurance system and by HMOs here at home. ◉

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*Robert Claiborne has been writing about science and medicine, for both scientists and the general public, for over 20 years; his books include* Climate, Man and History *and* God or Beast: Evolution and Human Nature. *He is currently working on a book about the high cost of health, from which this article has been adapted.*

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Answer to *Wit Twister* (see page 40):
Inter, inert, niter, Trine

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# Double-Crostic

by Thomas H. Middleton

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 J | 2 I | 3 V | | 4 O | 5 K | 6 H | 7 T | 8 W | 9 B | 10 U | 11 L | 12 V | 13 G | 14 F | 15 I | 16 P | | | |
| 17 Y | 18 I | 19 D | 20 T | 21 K | 22 R | | 23 M | 24 T | | 25 H | 26 W | 27 E | | 28 Y | 29 K | 30 N | 31 V | | |
| 32 Q | 33 I | | 34 X | 35 F | 36 U | 37 S | 38 T | 39 E | | 40 O | 41 K | | 42 A | 43 R | 44 M | 45 U | 46 T | | |
| 47 L | | 48 W | 49 O | 50 Q | 51 R | 52 Y | 53 I | 54 D | 55 F | 56 N | 57 T | 58 E | | 59 O | 60 J | | 61 G | | |
| 62 B | 63 W | | 64 I | 65 A | 66 P | 67 Q | 68 X | | 69 R | 70 O | 71 L | 72 B | | 73 R | 74 C | 75 G | 76 D | | |
| 77 A | | 78 N | 79 J | 80 X | 81 Q | | 82 W | 83 A | 84 K | 85 D | | 86 V | 87 C | 88 P | 89 O | 90 G | 91 L | | |
| 92 S | 93 B | 94 V | | 95 P | 96 E | 97 K | 98 W | 99 H | | 100 A | 101 F | 102 L | 103 U | | 104 F | 105 T | 106 S | | |
| 107 X | 108 Q | 109 R | 110 I | 111 L | 112 U | 113 A | 114 D | | 115 W | 116 G | 117 O | 118 I | 119 J | | 120 V | 121 D | 122 R | | |
| 123 F | 124 W | 125 E | | 126 H | 127 G | 128 S | 129 R | 130 I | 131 Q | 132 J | 133 B | 134 X | 135 P | | 136 A | 137 L | 138 N | | |
| 139 S | 140 W | | 141 K | 142 S | 143 C | 144 D | 145 G | 146 O | | 147 I | 148 N | 149 L | 150 R | 151 B | 152 X | | 153 X | | |
| 154 R | | 155 E | 156 X | 157 D | 158 F | | 159 K | 160 T | 161 O | | 162 V | 163 L | | 164 Y | 165 G | | 166 M | | |
| 167 D | | 168 J | 169 X | 170 O | 171 Q | 172 A | | 173 U | 174 B | 175 M | 176 P | 177 F | 178 T | 179 G | 180 I | 181 Y | | | |
| 182 T | 183 H | | 184 V | 185 O | 186 A | 187 R | | 188 F | 189 I | 190 B | 191 C | 192 G | 193 R | 194 A | 195 U | | 196 K | | |
| 197 T | 198 E | 199 W | | 200 Q | 201 X | 202 R | 203 V | | 204 H | 205 I | 206 J | 207 F | | 208 I | 209 X | 210 B | 211 H | | |
| 212 Q | 213 P | 214 C | | 215 U | 216 M | | 217 E | 218 X | | 219 K | 220 B | 221 Y | 222 T | 223 J | 224 I | | | | |

## Number 138

Instructions

If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a very few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle.

Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.

The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.

The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

### CLUES

A. Rock drill operated by compressed air

B. "Under the blossom that hangs ____" (3 wds.; *The Tempest*)

C. Avocation

D. Characterized by prudishness (comp.)

E. Incidentally (3 wds.)

F Republic in western Africa (2 wds.)

G. "Thus the native hue of ____/ Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" (*Hamlet*)

H. Native or inhabitant of Rio de Janeiro

I. Joseph Conrad novel (3 wds.)

J. Purple or bluish-violet variety of crystallized quartz

K. Restore to youthful vigor

L. Regions

### WORDS

42 83 186 65 77 113 194 100
136 172

174 210 9 72 93 133 190 220
151 62

74 87 143 191 214

19 54 76 85 114 121 144 157
167

217 27 39 96 125 155 198 58

104 123 188 207 14 55 101 158
177 35

90 145 165 179 192 13 61 75
116 127

6 25 99 126 183 204 211

2 18 110 130 147 205 208 224
15 189 118 180 33 53 64

132 206 223 1 79 60 119 168

5 29 219 21 84 97 141 159
196 41

47 91 102 163 111 149 11 71
137

### CLUES

M. Rake

N. Fundamental spirit of a culture

O. John Updike novel (2 wds.)

P. Want of efficacy or force

Q. Unlawfully

R. Sydney is its capital (3 wds.)

S. Russian dancer, teacher, choreographer (1834–1901)

T Considering (4 wds.)

U. Environments

V. Gloomy and irritable

W. He's famous for his gin (full name)

X. "Soft underbelly," for instance (2 wds.)

Y. Brings to light (2 wds.)

### WORDS

166 175 216 23 44

56 78 148 30 138

146 4 40 59 70 89 117 170
161 185 49

88 176 213 16 66 95 135

171 212 32 108 50 131 200 67
81

150 193 69 154 122 43 109 187
73 129 51 202 22

106 128 139 37 142 92

178 160 105 7 46 57 20 222
197 182 38 24

195 10 103 215 112 36 45 173

94 203 184 31 3 120 12 162
86

63 124 8 115 82 98 199 26
48 140

153 34 169 209 68 107 218 152
201 80 156 134

221 164 17 181 52 28

Answer to ***Double-Crostic No. 137*** appears on page *47.*



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# Smoke Signals

**"To ban cigarettes altogether would be to do something that, however healthful, is not strictly necessary and that limits the freedom of those who like to smoke."**

IN RECENT WEEKS, the campaign against smoking has assumed new urgency and scored some impressive victories. A national No-Smoking Day evoked articles and editorials against the evil weed. The Civil Aeronautics Board has banned all cigar and pipe smoking on commercial airlines and has taken steps that could lead to the prohibition of cigarette smoking as well. Regulations against smoking in the Pentagon's dining halls and classrooms have been sent to the Army, Air Force, and Navy "for responses on how to implement them."

Now I am not, nor have I ever been, a smoker. At the age of eight, I stole one of my father's cigars to share experimentally with a friend; fearful that our crime was about to be discovered by an approaching adult, I swallowed the lit butt. In college, unwilling to be considered uncool by classmates, I inhaled marijuana, but never with enjoyment. (Even in that era of "do your own thing," there were pressures to conform.) Shortly after graduation, I adopted a pipe in the belief that the first step toward being a writer was looking like one; but I soon abandoned it after finding that most of my reading time was spent trying to keep my tobacco on fire.

I am neither allergic to cigarette smoke nor fond of it. If at a lunch counter a woman asks in the middle of my meal would I mind if she smokes, I consider saying yes. I sit gratefully in the nonsmoking section of airplanes and movie houses.

Nonetheless, I am troubled by the attitude and success of the campaigners against smoking. It is one thing to warn consumers that cigarette smoking may be hazardous to their health; living in a world of often invisible dangers, we should be grateful for the caution. It is even arguable that given the demonstrated ability of television and radio to reach below the intelligence and to sow subliminal "needs," cigarette advertising should be banished from the airwaves. But having alerted the consumer to the danger and having protected him from subliminal seduction, what arguments can be used to justify what the antismoking militants see as their eventual goal: the outlawing of cigarettes?

A recent editorial in *The New York Times* cited some reasons why the Carter administration ought not to be "resigned to a national addiction that will kill 300,000 Americans this year." Cost was one reason: According to Surgeon General Julius Richmond, ailments caused by smoking will cost the nation $20 billion this year. The will of the American smoker was another: Eight out of ten smokers would like to quit, said Richmond, adding, "We must help them, and they want us to."

Never having smoked, I do not comprehend the force or the invincibility of an addiction to tobacco, but I do know a number of less-than-Herculean Americans who have, albeit with some discomfort, managed to shake their addiction. I wonder what it is about the purported 80 percent of smokers who want to quit that prevents them from doing so. I also wonder whether the cost of treating a sickness should be used as an argument for removing the freedom to incur the sickness and whether it is government's role to help citizens do something that they are not psychologically capable of doing themselves. (By this logic, government should limit the calories allowed to each American per day.)

The advantage of a democracy over various more or less organized methods of government is that it allows a citizen the maximum freedom to do as he pleases up to the point at which his freedom infringes on someone else's. As the world becomes more complex and people become more interdependent, our freedoms necessarily become more restricted. Speed limits were not needed before automobile and highway manufacturers created the opportunities for serious accidents. It was not necessary to prohibit homeowners from burning leaves until everyone's air became smoky.

What we must guard against, though, is using the excuse of interdependence to enact restrictions that, however desirable, are unnecessary. I suspect that the creation of nonsmoking sections in public places answers the complaints of most nonsmokers. To ban cigarettes altogether would be to do something that, however healthful, is not strictly necessary and that would limit the freedom of those who like to smoke. Government should resist the temptation to treat its citizens like children—making us wear seat belts that buzz if we don't fasten them, forbidding us marijuana or Laetrile or tobacco simply because they haven't been proved as safe as mother's milk (which nowadays isn't safe, either). Advise us, yes; restrict us when we threaten the essential freedoms of others. But do not attempt to protect us from all the dangers of existence.

There are two sorts of freedom: freedom *from* and freedom *to*. Given the choice, democracy should favor the latter. Whether or not one likes smoking, the freedom to smoke is a more important right than freedom from smoking or its consequences. When usually thoughtful opinion shapers like *The New York Times* start advocating laws not because they are necessary for the preservation of our freedom but because they would be good for us, it is time to worry. —CARLL TUCKER



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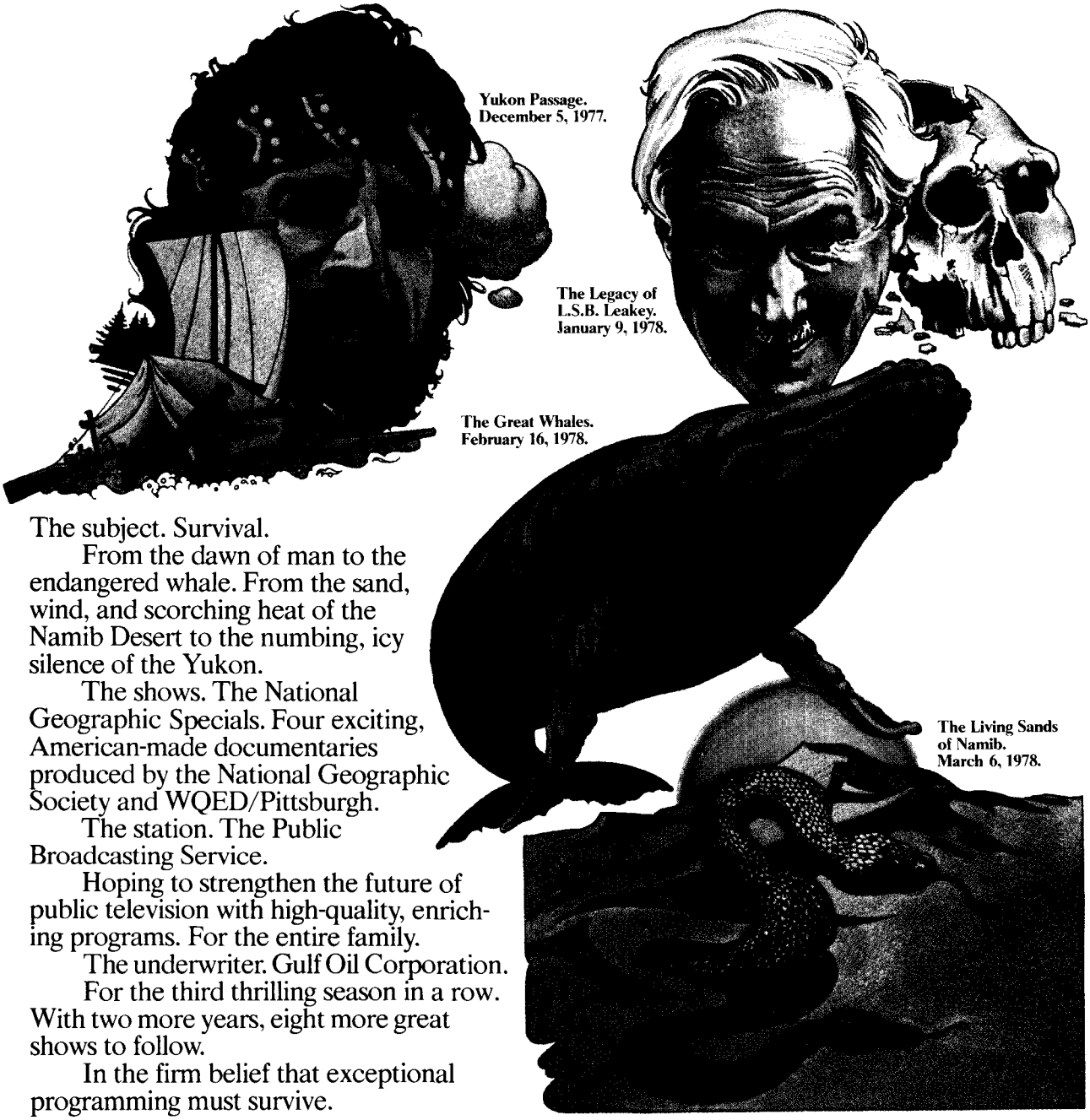
# This year, it's a matter of survival.



Yukon Passage.
December 5, 1977.

The Legacy of
L.S.B. Leakey.
January 9, 1978.

The Great Whales.
February 16, 1978.

The Living Sands
of Namib.
March 6, 1978.

The subject. Survival.

From the dawn of man to the endangered whale. From the sand, wind, and scorching heat of the Namib Desert to the numbing, icy silence of the Yukon.

The shows. The National Geographic Specials. Four exciting, American-made documentaries produced by the National Geographic Society and WQED/Pittsburgh.

The station. The Public Broadcasting Service.

Hoping to strengthen the future of public television with high-quality, enriching programs. For the entire family.

The underwriter. Gulf Oil Corporation.

For the third thrilling season in a row. With two more years, eight more great shows to follow.

In the firm belief that exceptional programming must survive.

# The National Geographic Specials.

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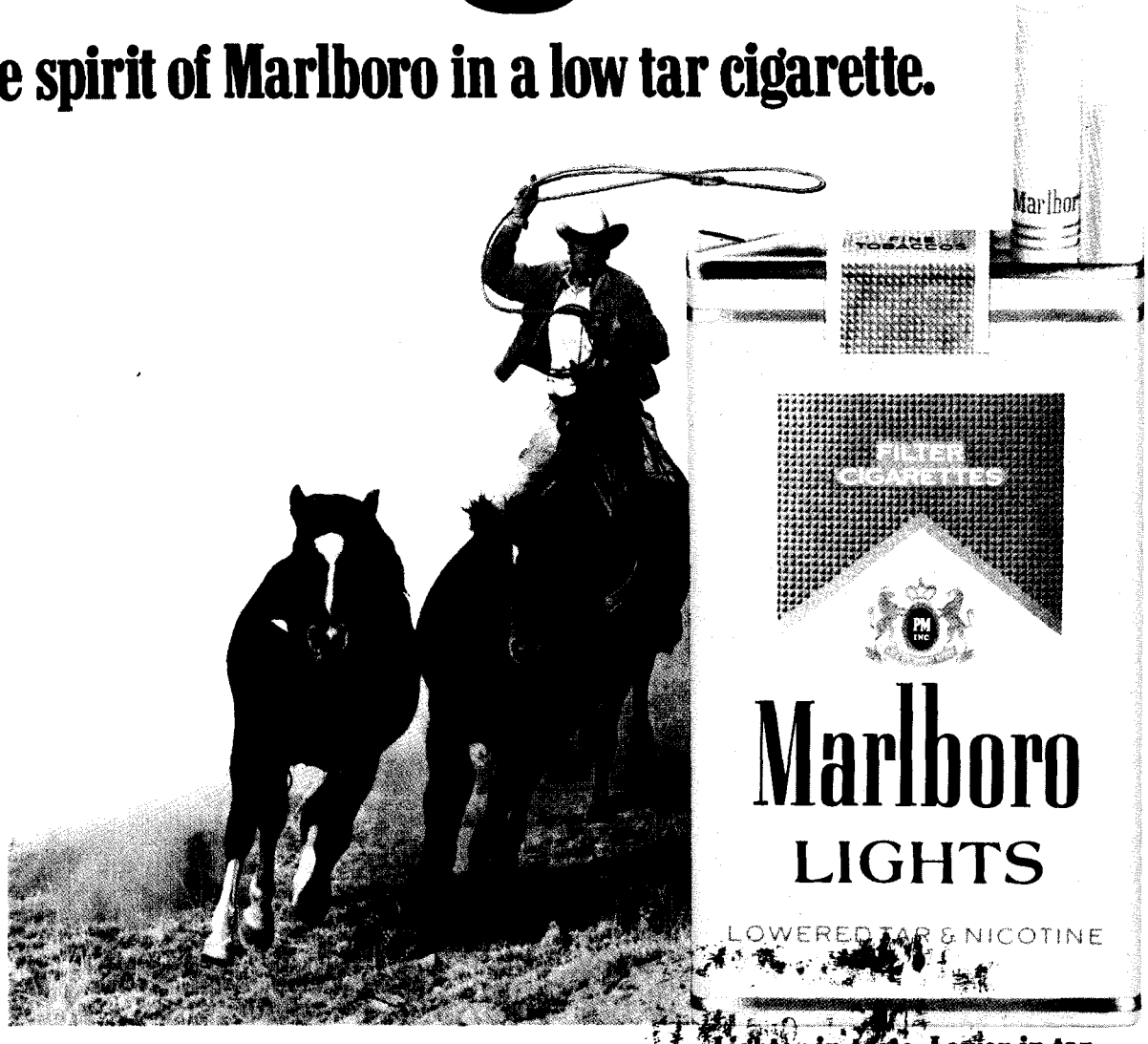
# Marlboro Lights

## The spirit of Marlboro in a low tar cigarette.




**Lighter in taste. Lower in tar. And still offers up the same quality that has made Marlboro famous.**

12 mg "tar," 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Aug.'77

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

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